VISIT…

NILE RODGERS & BERNARD EDWARDS:

Funk & Disco

Grooves for Bass & Guitar

Includes Bass and Guitar Transcriptions for 20 classic songs including: We Are Family, Le Freak, Upside Down, He's The Greatest Dancer, Lost In Music, Good Times, Thinking Of You, Everybody Dance, Why, My Feet Keep Dancing, I Want Your Love and many more!

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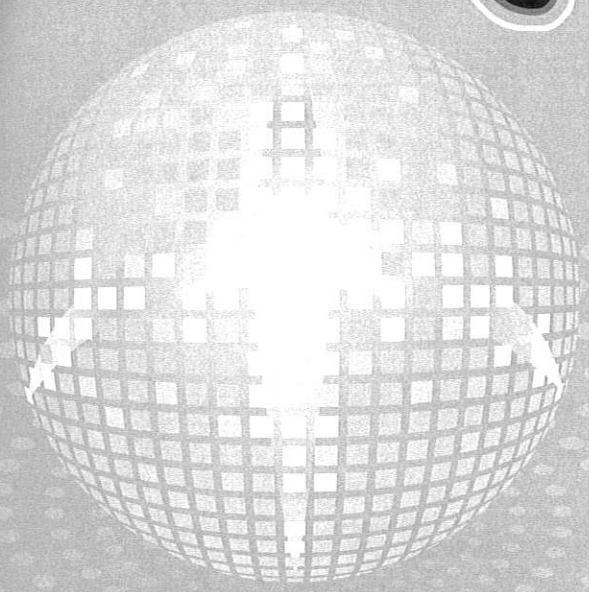

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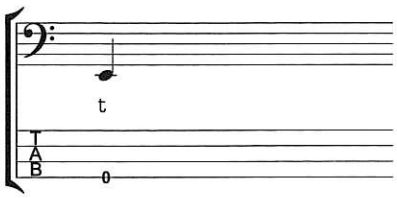
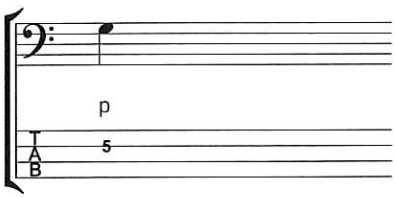
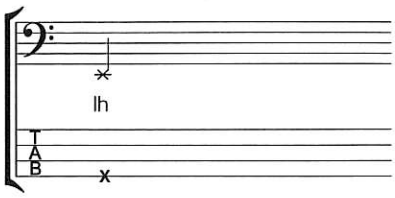
Notation Legend



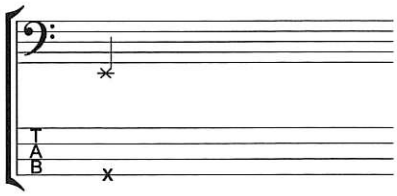
Note is slapped with the thumb



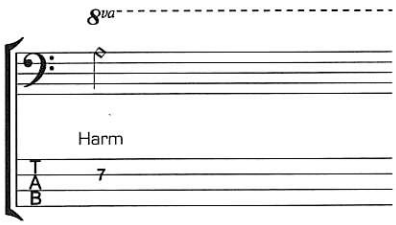
Note is plucked with the first or second finger



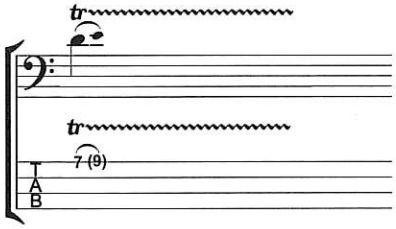
Note is produced by hammering with the left hand



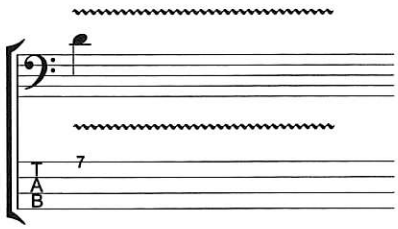
Ghost note - the note is a pitchless, rhythmic sound



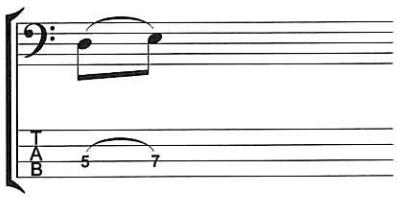
Note is played as a harmonic



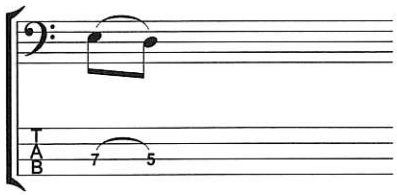
Trill between the two notes indicated



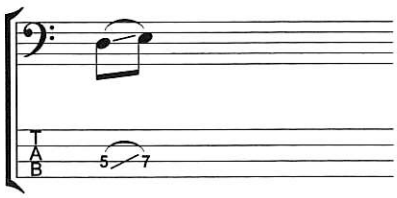
Note is played with Vibrato



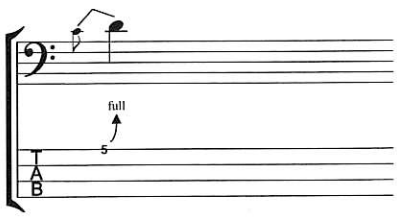
Hammer on - only the first note is struck, the second is played with another finger



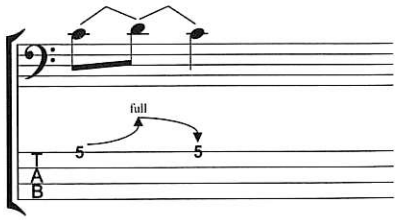
Pull Off - only the first note is struck



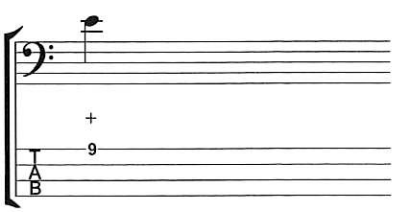
Slide between the two notes



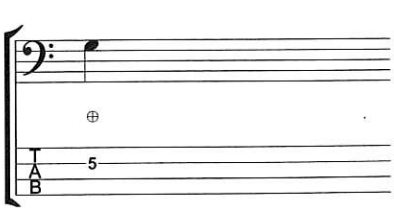
Note is bent up to the interval indicated. ½ = half tone, full = full tone



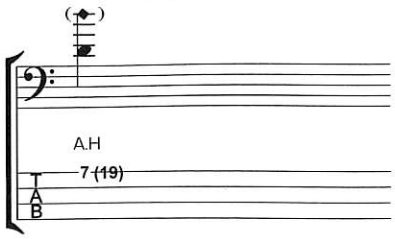
Note is bent up to the interval indicated then released back to the original note



Note is tapped with the right hand



Note is tapped with the left hand



Note is played as an artificial harmonic. Right hand taps the note an octave above fretted position

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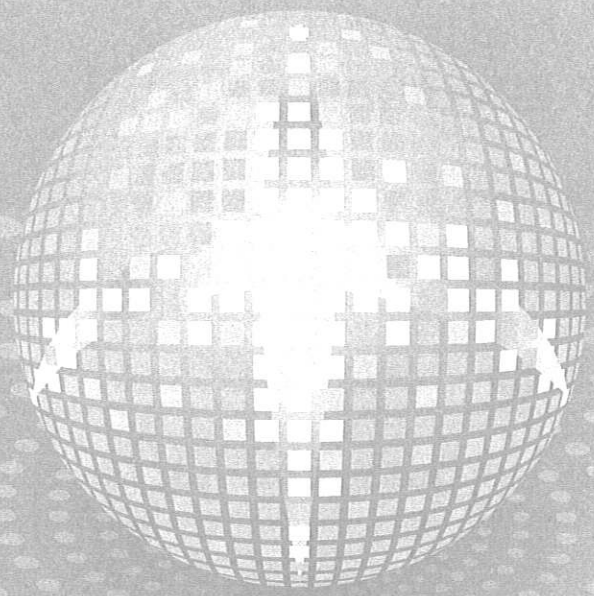

Credits

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Useful Web Links:

Nile Rodgers Official Website: www.nilerodgers.com
Chic Tribute: www.chictribute.com
We Are Family Foundation: www.wearefamilyfoundation.org
Sumthing Distribution: www.sumthing.com
Sister Sledge: www.sistersledge.com
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Introduction

This book is a detailed study of some of the greatest grooves written and played by bassist Bernard Edwards and guitarist Nile Rodgers. Between them, this legendary duo – with the help of drummer Tony Thompson and the rest of the Chic Organisation – created some of the most memorable music of the seventies and eighties. As founding members of Chic they were responsible for mega-hits such as 'Dance Dance Dance (Yowsah Yowsah Yowsah)', 'Everybody Dance', 'Good Times', 'I Want Your Love', 'My Feet Keep Dancing', and of course, 'Le Freak', the record that became Atlantic Records' biggest selling single upon its release in 1979, and one that remains hugely popular to this day. As the writers, performers and producers behind acts like Sister Sledge, Diana Ross, Sheila and B. Devotion and Debbie Harry, they were responsible for even more hits, such as 'We Are Family', 'He's The Greatest Dancer', 'Upside Down' and 'I'm Coming Out'. Both together and separately, they were able to extend their influence still further as producers: acts such as Madonna, David Bowie, Duran Duran, ABC, and Robert Palmer all found enormous success through their collaborations with them.

With such an impressive track record – and taking into account the fact that their music is some of most sampled music ever written – it seems strange that the names Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards remain relatively unknown. This book is both an attempt to redress this imbalance, and at the same time is a tribute to the late Bernard Edwards, one of the true legends of the bass, who sadly passed away in 1996, aged just 43.

This book has been a long time in the making. Aside from painstakingly transcribing twenty of their finest works, there was an enormous amount of research to be done if I was to do justice to these legendary musicians. While information on the duo is in relative short supply on the internet, I was lucky enough to find two fantastic reference sources to assist me in my endeavours. The first is website www.chictribute.com, a real treasure trove of information for fans of Chic and their associated recordings. The site features some great video performances, as well as many interviews with members past and present – a genuine goldmine. The second is Daryl Easlea's superb book *Everybody Dance: Chic and the Politics of Disco*. I don't think I have ever read a more entertaining, fascinating and informative book, and it's one that I highly recommend reading – it will certainly make a great accompaniment to studying from this book.

With just a quick glance through this book you'll notice that I have not written full transcriptions for these songs. Although I intended to do so originally, the length of many of the tracks (some of which clock in at over eight minutes) meant that the book would have been very big indeed. With that in mind, and taking account the enormous amount of repetition in each of the songs, I decided to transcribe the basic guitar and bass parts for each section of the song, then include any cool fills and variations as extras. This approach enabled me to keep the book to a reasonable size, and also allows the reader the opportunity to read about each part as they learn it.

As I was writing this book, I was tempted to include a playalong CD to enable the reader to play along with the songs in a 'minus-one' format. I decided against this for two reasons, the first being the extra time and cost required to assemble such a project. The second and most important reason for not doing so is that I believe there is no better reference when learning these songs than the original versions themselves. By playing along to the original tracks you will be working and learning alongside one of the greatest rhythm sections of all time – surely there can be no greater experience than that.

I hope you enjoy this book. It's been a genuine pleasure to research and write, and I sincerely hope that it's been worth the wait. You can of course let me know exactly what you think by emailing me at: info@basslinepublishing.com.

Enjoy!

Stuart Clayton
January 2008

Chapter 1
Biographies

Bernard Edwards

Bernard Edwards was one of the most influential and important bassists of the 1970's and 1980's, although like slap bass pioneer Larry Graham, outside of the bass world he is a relative unknown. His work with celebrated disco acts Chic and Sister Sledge – not to mention the countless other artists he recorded with and produced – has ensured that he truly deserves his place among the legends of the bass guitar. His untimely death in 1996 at the age of only 43 was a devastating blow, one felt by bassists the world over, but fortunately his legacy lives on through the countless bass players that he influenced over the course of his impressive career.

Bernard Edwards was born in Greenville, North Carolina on October 31st 1952, and at the age of 10 his family moved to New York so his father could look for work. Bernard showed an interest in music from a young age, and his first inclination was to pick up the tenor sax. However, when the bassist from the neighbourhood band left to join the military, he chose to sell his sax and buy a Fender bass. Inspired by legendary session bassists such as James Jamerson, Larry Graham, Duck Dunn, Jerry Jemmott and Chuck Rainey, Bernard studied the Motown hit records of the day, and quickly became proficient on the bass guitar himself.

By the early seventies he was studying music at New York's High School of the Performing Arts and working in a Bronx post office to supplement his musical career.

It was while working at the post office that he first heard of a guitarist named Nile Rodgers – one of his work colleagues was the mother of Nile's girlfriend, and she would often tell him about the fantastic guitarist her daughter was dating. Interested, Bernard passed his number along, but when Nile called and began talking about his crazy ideas for a band Bernard bluntly asked him to 'lose his number!' However, it wouldn't be long before the pair met face to face in a function band on the New York circuit – although neither musician would realize until much later that they had spoken on the phone already. Both were struck by the musical ability of the other, and from that point on, would call and recommend each other for gigs. Pretty soon they were firm friends and regularly gigging together on the New York club circuit.

Selected Discography

With Chic
Chic (1977), *C'est Chic* (1978), *Risqué* (1979), *Real People* (1980), *Take It Off* (1981), *Tongue in Chic* (1982), *Believer* (1983), *Chic-ism* (1992), *Live at the Budokan* (1999)

With Sister Sledge
We Are Family (1979)
Love Somebody Today (1980)

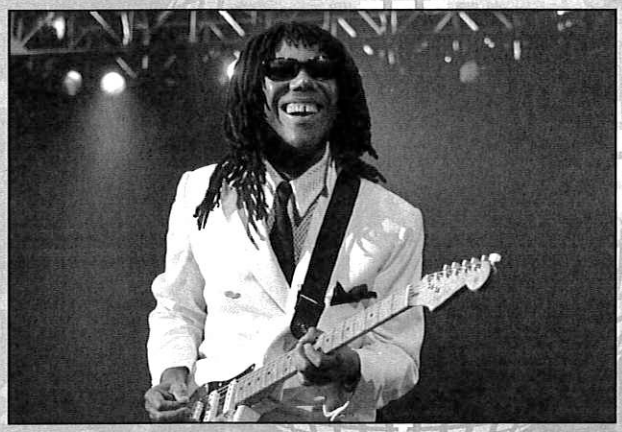
With Diana Ross
Diana (1980)

With Debbie Harry
Koo Koo (1981)

With Sheila and B. Devotion
King Of The World (1980)

As a Solo Artist
Glad To Be Here (1983)

As A Producer
Norma Jean, with Norma Jean (1978)
Swept Away, with Diana Ross (1984)
The Power Station, with Power Station (1985)
'A View To A Kill', with Duran Duran (1985)
Heat, with Nona Hendryx (1985)
Riptide, with Robert Palmer (1985)
Cocker, with Joe Cocker (1986)
Hearts In Motion, with Air Supply (1986)
Alphabet City, with ABC (1987)
Jody Watley, with Jody Watley (1987)
Out Of Order, with Rod Stewart (1988)
Under The One Sky, with Distance (1989)
Move To This, with Cathy Dennis (1990)
Vagabond Heart, with Rod Stewart (1991)
Thelma & Louise, Soundtrack, Various (1991)
Waynes World 2, Soundtrack, Various (1993)
Living In Fear, with The Power Station (1996)



Nile Rodgers

Alongside bassist Bernard Edwards, Nile Rodgers created some of the most important and influential disco/funk music of all time, and his work as a producer in later years has earned him widespread acclaim. He has received a Lifetime Achievement Award and a Heroes Award from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, and on September 19th 2005, he was honoured at the Dance Music Hall of Fame ceremony in New York when he was inducted for his many outstanding achievements as a producer, along with former fellow band mate Bernard Edwards.

Nile was born into a very poor family on September 19th 1952. His mother was young, and unprepared for motherhood, while his father was a professional musician and continuously on the road. As a consequence Nile rarely saw his father as he grew up, although he was inspired by him to become a musician. As a teenager, Nile grew up in Greenwich Village, a musical melting pot of different cultures, styles and influences. Opportunities to become involved in music were abundant, and Nile quickly began to experiment with various musical instruments: he tried his hand at the flute, the clarinet and the saxophone in school bands before gravitating towards the guitar once he realized that women were usually interested in the guitar player! Nile studied hard, using Beatles songs for guidance, and before long was auditioning for bands in his local area. Through the impact of the Vietnam War, Nile also became politically inclined, joining the Black Panther movement at 16, and becoming active at protest marches. Through his political inclinations he was introduced to folk music, and then to the music of influential guitarists such as Jimi Hendrix and Jimmy Page. He was an open-minded young musician, and also eagerly studied Jazz and the music of legendary jazz musicians such as Wes Montgomery, Django Reinhardt, Eric Dolphy, and John Coltrane.

Nile's first bands were the Tom Murray Blues Band, and New World Rising, where he played alongside legend-in-the-making Robbie Dupree. His first important gig – as a member of the touring version of the popular TV show Sesame Street – came along in 1969. He later went on to work in the house band in Harlem's famous Apollo Theatre, playing with legendary artists such as Ben E. King, The Cadillacs, Aretha Franklin and Parliament Funkadelic. It was through these gigs that he learned the key to survival for any musician: versatility.

After meeting bassist Bernard Edwards in 1970, Nile began performing with him in the Big Apple Band. The pair soon became an inseparable duo.

Selected Discography

With Chic
Chic (1977), *C'est Chic* (1978), *Risqué* (1979), *Real People* (1980), *Take It Off* (1981), *Tongue in Chic* (1982), *Believer* (1983), *Chic-ism* (1992), *Live at the Budokan* (1999)

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We Are Family (1979)
Love Somebody Today (1980)

With Diana Ross
Diana (1980)

With Debbie Harry
Koo Koo (1981)

With Sheila and B. Devotion
King Of The World (1980)

As a Solo Artist
Adventures In The Land Of The Good Groove (1983)
B-Movie Matinee (1985)
The Outloud (1987)

As A Producer
Let's Dance, with David Bowie (1983)
Situation X, with Michael Gregory (1983)
Like A Virgin, with Madonna (1984)
Flash, with Jeff Beck (1985)
She's The Boss, with Mick Jagger (1985)
Notorious, with Duran Duran (1986)
Inside Out, with Phillip Bailey (1986)
Inside Story, with Grace Jones (1986)
L is for Lover, with Al Jarreau (1986)
Cosmic Thing, with The B52's (1989)
Slam, with Dan Reed Network (1989)
Workin' Overtime, with Diana Ross (1989)
So Happy, with Eddie Murphy (1989)
Heart Of Gold, with Carole Davis (1989)
Move To This, with Cathy Dennis (1990)
The Heat, with Dan Reed Network (1991)
Good Stuff, with The B52's (1992)
Black Tie, White Noise, with David Bowie (1993)
Your Filthy Little Mouth, with David Lee Roth (1994)
Little Wonder, with David Bowie (1997)
Samantha Cole, with Samantha Cole (1997)
On and On, with All-4-One (1998)
Public Enemy, Soundtrack, Various (1999)
One Step Closer, with Marta Sanchez (2000)
Just Me, with Tina Arena (2001)
Dallali, with Cheb Mami (2001)
Only A Woman Like You, with Michael Bolton (2002)
We Are Family, with Nile Rodgers All Stars (2001)

Chapter 2
The History of Chic

Early Days

In 1973 Bernard Edwards was asked to join the Big Apple Band, the backing musicians for vocal group New York City. Before long he had convinced the bandleader to hire his good friend and musical partner, Nile Rodgers. Once a member, Rodgers was viewed as an unpopular choice for the group, and his hippie attire and attitude meant that the rest of the band viewed him with suspicion. Fortunately for him however, he was too good to get rid of, and eventually he found favour with the group after he sold his jazz guitar and bought a Fender Stratocaster, bringing a more up-to-date tone to the band. New York City came to an end after a tour of the United Kingdom, one which was pivotal in that it exposed Nile to a group called Roxy Music. Struck by the sophistication and high fashion look of the group, Nile decided that he and Bernard should create something similar, but more rooted in black music.

Upon their return to the US, Nile and Bernard began auditioning musicians for the Big Apple Band while working as a support group for singer Carol Douglas. It was during this period that they began to formulate what would become the trademark Chic sound. With just a few musicians, now including future Chic stalwarts Rob Sabino on piano and Tony Thompson on drums, they learnt how to replicate the sound of a much larger group, incorporating other instrument parts into their own, and creating a much more powerful groove. The group were to turn their hand to many genres of music in order to work as often as possible, and frequently performed rock gigs under the name The Boys since their opening song was 'The Boys Are Back In Town' by Thin Lizzy.

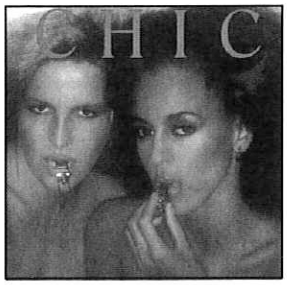
In 1976 Walter Murphy had a hit single with 'A Fifth of Beethoven' a disco record that sampled Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. The record was credited to Walter Murphy and the Big Apple Band – Murphy had performed the track himself, and had no idea of an actual band using the Big Apple Band name. The popularity of the record persuaded Nile and Bernard to try their hands at disco, which at the time was emerging as a highly popular musical genre thanks largely to the hit movie *Saturday Night Fever*. After studying popular disco acts such as The Brothers Johnson and Rufus and Chaka Khan, they began recording demos with DJ Robert Drake in Electric Lady Studios and The Hit Factory during the night. In order to do so, Nile made an arrangement to trade session playing for studio time. Much of the group's early songs were classics set to a disco beat – Nile briefly envisioned creating a disco medley of pieces such as Gershwin's 'Bess You Is My Woman Now', an idea clearly inspired by Murphy's success with 'A Fifth Of Beethoven'. But the group also recorded a song called 'Everybody Dance' which Drake liked, and began playing in the club he worked at as a DJ, The Night Owl. It was instantly popular, and proved to Nile and Bernard that disco was a style worth pursuing .

However, the record that really got things moving for the band was not 'Everybody Dance', but a song that Bernard was asked to write with Kenny Lehman, the producer/writer and room-mate of Rob Drake. The song in question was originally intended to be a B-side for a promotional song for the New York Tourism Office called 'I Love New York, What A Great Vacation'. Bernard was quick to involve Nile in the project and between them they wrote 'Dance Dance Dance.' Lehman's contribution was minimal, although he did pinch his nose and add the 'Yowsah Yowsah Yowsah' vocal refrain that became one of the most memorable parts of the song. The group recruited several vocalists to sing the track: Norma Jean Wright, Alfa Anderson, Diva Gray, David Lasley and Luther Vandross.

The Birth of Chic

With a great song written, the group needed to settle on a band name to separate them from Walter Murphy's fictional band. For a while they performed as Allah & The Knife Wielding Punks, before settling on the name Chic, arrived at for several reasons – it's

implications of fashion, and the similarity to KISS, the glam rock group idolized by some members of the band. The name fit perfectly with Niles' Roxy Music-inspired vision of a high-fashion sophisticated disco act, and so the group bought business suits to fit this image. Finding a record deal however was not so easy. Atlantic Records turned them down twice, but with the help of a trumpet player named Everett Hollins, the group were eventually signed to a small label called Buddah. The debut single 'Dance, Dance, Dance (Yowsah, Yowsah, Yowsah)' was released as a 12" in 1977 and began to climb the charts steadily. It did so well in fact that it captured the attention of Atlantic Records, who quickly snapped the group up after Buddah failed to renew its option. 'Dance Dance Dance (Yowsah Yowsah Yowsah)' was released officially by Atlantic Records in October 1977 and sold a million copies in its first month. It reached number 6 in the US Pop and R&B Charts, number 1 on the Disco Chart, and number 6 in the UK Pop Charts. Chic were officially in business.



Chic's debut album *Chic* was recorded in two studios, The Power Station and Electric Lady. It featured a stellar track list containing the debut single, and other songs which have since become Chic classics: 'Strike Up The Band', 'Everybody Dance' and 'Sao Paulo'. The album cover featured two female models (neither a member of the band), and was a clear nod to Roxy Music, and an indication of the sophisticated sound of the band. Using models for the cover shot also created a sense of anonymity around the group, and an air of mystique. All of these factors were to contribute to Chic's inevitable success. *Chic* was released to critical acclaim on 22nd November 1977 and reached number 27 on the US Pop Charts, and number 12 on the black charts.

Up until this point Chic had been a recording project only, but the demand for live shows was now undeniable and so a live band needed to be assembled. Unfortunately, pianist Rob Sabino was not to perform with the group – he had commitments with The Simms Brothers Band, but would continue to record with Chic. The touring band therefore became Bernard Edwards, Nile Rodgers, Tony Thompson, Norma Jean Wright, with Raymond Jones added on keys, and Luci Martin and Luther Vandross on backing vocals. Luci Martin soon became joint lead vocalist with Norma, and Alfa Anderson, from Luther Vandross's band was added as a backing vocalist. A string section, led by violinist Karen Milne was also added. Nile and Bernard took all the band members clothes shopping, ensuring that they each had the right look for Chic.

'Everybody Dance' was the obvious choice for Chic's follow-up single. Released in March 1978, it reached number 38 in the US Pop Charts, and number 9 in the UK Pop Charts. Shortly after, Norma Jean Wright signed a record deal with Bearsville/

The Chic Writing/Recording Process

The Chic writing process is one that Bernard and Nile developed over the early years of their career. Because they had learnt to create a wide-ranging sound between just themselves and drummer Tony Thompson, they were able to create grooves that sounded fully formed. Bernard once commented that they would work out songs between them at home, refining their individual parts, then record them in the studio. This meant that they were able to capture a 'good-time' vibe, which came across on record, and became a big part of the unmistakable Chic sound.

Chic recorded together at the Power Station studio, all in the same room for maximum group interaction. Songs could be recorded in a matter of hours, and it was common for the bass, drums and guitar parts for an entire album to be done in a matter of days. In fact, the basic tracks for the *C'est Chic* album and the Sister Sledge album *We Are Family* were all recorded in about four days, according to producer Bob Clearmountain.

The Chic sound is built around a rock solid rhythm section and carefully conceived bass and guitar integration. The grooves themselves, while sounding complex are often deceptively simple, and in some cases almost minimalist. Both Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards had the maturity to leave space in their lines where it was needed, allowing it breathe, and therefore groove harder. Like most disco acts Chic used strings on their recordings, but were a little more creative with them. They were often used in a highly rhythmic manner (as on 'Dance, Dance Dance'), rather than just using them to create a wash of background harmony. They also played important countermelodies (think of the Breakdown sections of 'Thinking Of You' and 'I Want Your Love'). This is the essence of the Chic sound – a tight rhythm section, merged with sparing and inventive use of strings, and elegant vocals/ lyrics. Chic were also creative with their vocals: the trademark Chic vocal sound often consists of a male vocal amongst the female vocal parts, and quite often the singers will sing in unison rather than harmony.

Warner Brothers thinking that she would be able to perform with Chic and develop a solo career at the same time. There was however a conflict of interests and it was necessary for Wright to leave the group. Nile and Bernard wrote and produced Norma Jean Wright's first album, simply titled *Norma Jean* – this was their first opportunity for produce another artist. Alfa Anderson stepped forward to take Norma Jean's position in Chic.

Chic's next single, 'Le Freak' was arguably the biggest of their career, and along with 'Good Times', 'We Are Family' and 'He's The Greatest Dancer' has become one of the disco era's most defining tracks. Upon its release in November 1978 it went to number 1 in the US and number 7 in the UK, and became Atlantic Records' biggest selling record of all time. The accompanying album, *C'est Chic* was a clear development from the debut album, and is considered one of the group's finest efforts. Alongside 'Le Freak' it contained several other songs that became Chic classics – 'Chic Cheer', 'I Want Your Love', 'Funny Bone' (an instrumental) and 'Happy Man', featuring none other than bassist Bernard Edwards on vocals.

With Chic considered a hot property at Atlantic Records, Bernard and Niles were given free reign to produce other Atlantic artists. After considering acts such as The Rolling Stones and Bette Midler, they chose Sister Sledge, a family vocal group who had achieved minor chart success throughout the early seventies but who were now Atlantic's least successful artists. The duo were confident that with their trademark rhythm section sound and ear for commercial success they could transform the group into superstars.

Sister Sledge

Born into a family of entertainers, sisters Debbie, Joni, Kim and Kathy Sledge began singing at a young age at the William Tempe C.M.E church in Philadelphia. Their grandmother was an opera singer, and it was she and the girls' mother Flo who encouraged the girls to sing at public events and charities in the local area. The sisters formed Sisters Sledge in 1971 whilst in their early teens. The group recorded their first single, 'Time Will Tell' for the Money Back label. The single was successful enough to attract the attention of a larger label, Atco, a subsidiary of Atlantic Records. Through Atco, they released their second single 'The Weatherman' in 1973, now under the non-plural name Sister Sledge. This was followed in 1975 by 'Mama Never Told Me', which reached number 20 on the UK singles chart, but which failed to chart in the US. The album, *Circle of Love* – which was produced by disco/funk producers Tony Silvester and Bert DeCoteaux – also yielded the single "Love, Don't You Go Through No Changes on Me" which was released in 1975 and became the group's first national hit, reaching number 92 on the US Hot 100, and number 31 on the US R&B chart.

The follow-up album *Together*, was released in 1977 and was produced in Munich by Michael Kunze and Silvester Levay. It gave the band another minor hit single in 'Blockbuster Boy', which hit #61 in the US R&B charts, and 'Cream of the Crop' which fared worse, peaking at only number 100 in the US R&B chart.

In 1978 Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards came to the group offering to produce their next record. They brought with them came the entire Chic Organization – Tony Thompson on drums, Raymond Jones on Fender Rhodes, Robert Sabino on Piano and Clavinet and Sammy Figureroa on Percussion – all of whom had played on Chic's records.

The resulting Sister Sledge album, *We Are Family*, was the first that the duo had produced outside of the Chic circle and was recorded simultaneously alongside Chic's *C'est Chic* album. The lead single, 'He's The Greatest Dancer' was a certified smash hit, scoring high on the UK and US Hot 100 charts, and hitting the top spot on the US R&B chart. The album, released on 24th January 1979 reached number 3 in the US, and remained in the charts for most of 1979. The second single, 'We Are Family' was an even bigger hit, and has become one of the best know tracks from the disco era. The third single from the album was 'Lost In Music', but thanks to the growing backlash towards disco (which by 1979 had begun to outstay its welcome), it failed to reproduce the success of the first two singles. However, all three songs have since become disco classics, and are all fantastic showcases for both Bernard's bass work and Nile's guitar playing. It is for their writing and playing on many of these, and Chic's songs that Bernard and Niles would soon become renowned among musicians everywhere.

With Niles and Bernard again producing and writing, the group released a follow-up album, *Love Somebody Today* in 1980. While it was without a doubt a strong album, featuring great tracks such as 'Got To Love Somebody' and 'Pretty Baby', it suffered from the general decline in the popularity of disco. The single 'Got to Love Somebody' reached number 34 in the UK

chart, number 6 on the US R&B chart, and number 64 on the US Pop chart, clearly failing to live up to the level of the previous album's success.

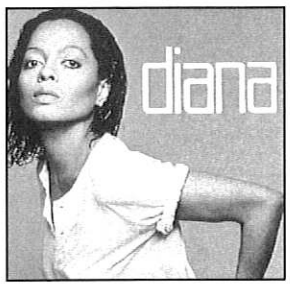
Sister Sledge switched to producer Narada Michael Walden in 1981, with whom they released the album *All-American Girls*. The album gave them two hits 'All American Girls' (which reached #3 on the US R&B chart, #79 on the US Pop chart and #41 on the UK pop chart), and 'Next Time You'll Know' (whose best position was #28 on the US R&B chart). The group continued to record through the eighties and nineties, and aside from the international hit 'Frankie' (which was #1 in the UK for 4 weeks) they were never quite able to recapture the success of *We Are Family*. However, their success has led to numerous awards including The Billboard Artist of the Year, The Tokyo Music Festival Silver Award, and two Grammy Nominations for Best R&B Duo or Group and Record of the Year.

The Continuing Story of Chic

There were personnel changes for Chic's third record, *Risqué* . Backing vocalist Luther Vandross's own career was beginning to accelerate, and he found himself unable to commit to Chic any longer. David Lasley was also to leave. Both were replaced by Nile Rodgers' old friend from his *Sesame Street* days, Fonzi Thornton, who brought with him one of his backing vocalists Michelle Cobbs, thus returning the Chic lineup to full strength. It was a good time to join Chic: 'Good Times', the group's next single climbed to the top of the American charts in August 1979, and has since become one of the best-known disco tracks of all time. It also contains arguably one of the most recognizable (and certainly one of the most copied) basslines of all time: essentially, 'Good Times' is the quintessential Bernard Edwards groove. Queen's bassist John Deacon has readily admitted that the song was the inspiration behind 'Another One Bites The Dust', and rappers The Sugarhill Gang used the groove to the song as the basis for their single 'Rappers Delight', the first commercial release rap record.

The *Risqué* album was recorded at The Power Station and Electric Lady studios in early 1979, and was released in August, following the release of lead single 'Good Times.' *Risqué* is arguably Chic's finest moment, containing some of their best work, and boasting a design concept (with a murder/mystery-style front cover) that was more adventurous than anything they had attempted before. The cover art was designed to tie in with the themes of some of the songs on the album. Although undeniably Chic's strongest statement so far, *Risqué* did not reach the top spot on either side of the Atlantic: in the US it climbed to number 5, in the UK it only got as far as number 29, although it did spend twelve weeks in the chart.

1980 was a busy year for Bernard and Nile, with not only a new Chic album, *Real People*, but also collaborations with Sister Sledge (for the *Love Somebody* Today album), Sheila & B. Devotion (the *Spacer* album) and Diana Ross. It is the latter of these collaborations that stands out as one of the most important in Chic's history.



Diana Ross, a star of the Motown era, was looking to reinvent herself for a younger audience and was introduced to the music of Chic by her children. Loving what she heard, she took steps to enlist Bernard and Nile as producers/ songwriters for her next album. After discussing ideas and themes with the Motown superstar, the duo quickly wrote the songs for the album and began recording. However, the process was not without it's difficulties, mainly caused by conflicts of personalities: Diana was not used to working in the highly controlled Chic environment, and was dissatisfied with the final mixing of the record, believing it to sound too much like Chic and not enough like Diana Ross. To that end, she had the album remixed – without the knowledge of Bernard and Niles – at the Hitsville studio in Los Angeles. The album was released in 1980.

Problems aside, *diana* is a fantastic album and yielded several hit singles, notably 'Upside Down', 'I'm Coming Out' and 'My Old Piano'. The Chic mix of the album was finally released in 2003, as a deluxe edition. It was well-received by critics and fans alike, leaving one to wonder how it would have fared had it been released in 1980 as originally intended.

By 1980 the popularity of disco (and Chic by association) was beginning to wane. Chic's *Real People*, released in July 1980 was far from being their best work (which is not to say that it doesn't contain some great songs), and was largely ignored by the record-buying public, reaching only #30 in the US, and failing to chart in the UK. Subsequent albums, *Take It Off* (1981), *Tongue In Chic* (1982), and *Believer* (1983) did nothing to restore Chic's popularity and the group disbanded in 1983. Nile and Bernard also decided to go their separate ways, although they remained friends. Both released solo albums – Bernard's was titled *Glad To Be Here*, and Nile's was titled *Adventures in the Land of the Good Groove*. Both were commercially unsuccessful.

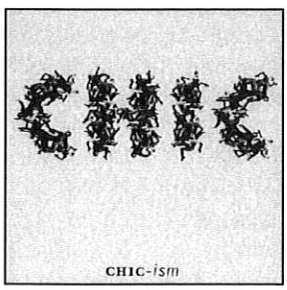
Niles and Bernard As Producers

Both Niles and Bernard were to find considerably more success as producers. With triumphs such as Sister Sledge, Diana Ross and Debbie Harry behind them, they found themselves in high-demand once Chic ended. Nile found success with David Bowie on his 1982 release *Let's Dance*, and subsequently as producer for Duran Duran, and Madonna. Nile was the mastermind behind Madonna's breakthrough album *Like A Virgin*, which featured two hit songs, 'Like A Virgin' and 'Material Girl'.

In 1985 Bernard formed the supergroup Power Station with Chic drummer Tony Thompson, singer Robert Palmer and Duran Duran members John and Andy Taylor. After producing their hugely successful first album he produced Robert Palmer's breakthrough album *Riptide*, and throughout the eighties and nineties produced albums for Duran Duran, ABC, Rod Stewart, Tina Turner and Diana Ross.

The Return of Chic

In 1992 Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards finally reunited as Chic for a one-off gig celebrating Nile's 36th birthday. The group consisted of the original line-up of Edwards, Rodgers, Alfa Anderson, Luci Martin and Fonzi Thornton. The only absentee was drummer Tony Thompson, who was unavailable and was therefore replaced by Omar Hakim. The gig was held at the China Club in New York and was well-received by the enthusiastic crowd. Following the success of the show, talk of a reunion was inevitable. However, the new lineup of Chic was to be radically different, with only Edwards and Rodgers surviving from the original lineup. New vocalists Sylver Logan Sharp and Jenn Thomas were brought in and Sonny Emory and Sterling Campbell were brought in to play drums on the new album, *Chic-ism*.



The writing process for *Chic-ism* was initially to be different from what the Rodgers/Edwards partnership had done before. Influenced by the rise in popularity of sampling and programming technology, Nile and Bernard initially began writing using samplers, in their own words, 'spending a lot of time programming and less time playing'. They soon realized that the approach wasn't for them and returned to the 'old-fashioned' way of writing with a live band. The advance in technology is still evident on the resulting *Chic-ism* album, as is the influence of rap music. Stand-out tracks include lead-single 'Chic Mystique' and 'Take My Love'.

The album was released to critical acclaim in February 1992, although commercially it fared far worse, reaching only number 39 in the US, and failing to chart at all in the UK.

Following the release of Chic-ism, Nile worked with David Bowie again on his new album *Black Tie, White Noise*, while Bernard hooked up with Tony Thompson again for a second Power Station album, *Living In Fear*.

In 1996 Nile Rodgers was invited to Tokyo by Japan Tobacco to receive their Super Producers Award. He assembled an all-star band, including Sylver Logan Sharp, Omar Hakim, Philip Saisse, Richard Hilton, Jill Jones and Christopher Max. Special guests included Bernard Edwards, Slash, Simon Le Bon, Steve Winwood, and Sister Sledge. The group performed three shows in Japan, the final two being at the legendary Budokan – the second of these shows was recorded and filmed for what later become Chic's *Live at the Budokan* album. Bernard Edwards, who had been quietly suffering with pneumonia was to become ill before the concert, yet managed to perform the gig at his own insistence. Tragically, he was found dead in his hotel room after the show, the cause of death ruled to be pneumonia. It was Nile who discovered his friend dead in his hotel room, a devastating blow that he took hard.

In 1998 Nile formed Sumthing Distribution, through which he released the recording of the final Chic performance, *Live at the Budokan*. In 2001 he founded the We Are Family Project and organized a re-recording of 'We Are Family' by over 200 celebrities in aid of the victims of the September 11th terrorist attacks. The United States Congress has since created a 'National We Are Family Day', celebrated on March 11th every year. In 2002 he also created the We Are Family Foundation to promote tolerance and multiculturalism and to support victims of intolerance.

After receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award and a Heroes Award from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, Nile opened a recording studio at Amanyara in the Caribbean. In the summer of 2006 he organised most of a tribute concert to Ahmet Ertegün at the Montreux Jazz Festival. This included performances by Chic, and many other artists who had performed for Ertegün's Atlantic Records.

Bernard Edwards was posthumously honored for his outstanding achievement as a producer on September 19th 2005 when he was inducted into the Dance Music Hall of Fame at a New York City ceremony.

Chapter 3
Gear and Technique

Bernard Edwards' Basses

Throughout much of his career Barnard used a 1977 Music Man StingRay bass and a Fender Precision Bass, and most of the material he recorded with Chic/Sister Sledge would have been played on these basses. He also used a B.C. Rich Eagle bass live since he liked its appearance. In the latter part of his career he was also seen using a Spector NS bass and a Sadowsky. His Music Man bass was bequeathed to Duran Duran bassist John Taylor following his death. For amplification he relied on Ampeg during the early Chic days, and later used both Gallien Krueger and Trace Elliot amps.

Playing Style

In the early days of Chic Bernard adopted an unusual playing style. As he had previously played the guitar, he was used to using a pick, but didn't want to use one for bass playing. He nevertheless kept the same hand position that a pick player would use, with the first finger and thumb held together as if he was holding a pick. He would strike the string with the top and bottom of his finger. Because he had his thumb above and his other three fingers curled up below, he managed to get both a lot of attack and a lot of low-end out of the technique. His fingers would frequently bleed using this technique, and it was not uncommon for him to finish a show with blood running down his bass. You can hear Bernard using this technique on the Chic track 'Dance Dance Dance (Yowsah, Yowsah, Yowsah)'. He also used a more standard fingerstyle technique, which is what can be heard on much of his recorded output. For many of his bass parts Bernard liked to keep his left hand low on the neck, favouring notes within the first five frets.

Nile Rodgers' Guitars

Nile Rodgers has used many different combinations of guitars and amps over the years. For most of the material in this book it sounds as though he used a Fender Strat, although he is also known for using Tokai and ESP imitation Strat's. He is also fond of old L-series Fender guitars, and a plexiglass custom made Guitarman which he has said is great for rhythm work. He also uses D'Aquisto archtops, a Gibson ES-335 and a 1937 D'Angelico New Yorker guitar which he refers to as the 'Big Jazz Box'

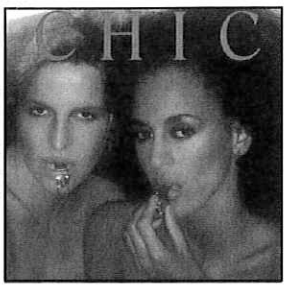
Niles has professed in interviews to never being completely happy with amplifiers. Over the years he has used a Marshall 610 amp, a Music Man 412 and various Soldano amps.

Playing Style

Nile has a great approach to rhythm playing, and it's one that was shown to him by Bernard Edwards: Nile often holds down a full chord across all six strings, but only actually allows certain notes from within the position to sound. This technique is a great way to mute, and when executed correctly results in Nile's 'choppy' rhythm style. 'Le Freak', and many other songs from this book are played in this way. In Daryl Easlea's book *Everybody Dance: Chic & The Politics of Disco*, Nile says that he considers his style to be something of an update of the style that Jimmy 'Chank' Nolan popularised with James Brown. His rhythmic style, which often consists of ghost note-heavy continuous sixteenth note patterns was also influenced by playing jazz, and 'filling in the holes'.

Harmonically, Nile's rhythm work is quite advanced, often incorporating upper chordal extensions such as the 9th, 11th and 13th - this is clearly a jazz influence.

Chapter 4
Dance Dance Dance



Artist: Chic
Album: *Chic*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards/Kenny Lehman
Chart Positions: #6 UK Chart, #6 US Hot 100 Chart, #6 US R&B Chart

Although 'Everybody Dance', (Chic's second hit single) was written first, it is with this song that the Chic story began. In 1977 Bernard Edwards was asked to record a B-sdie for a song called 'I Love New York, What A Great Vacation' which was a promotion piece for the New York Tourism Office. The resulting song, 'Dance Dance Dance' was written and recorded with DJ Robert Drake's room-mate Kenny Lehman who was producing the project. Between them, Bernard and Kenny were able to write most of the track, only falling short when it came to adding lyrics. Bernard called Nile Rodgers, who came in and added lyrics, and played guitar on the track. Pianist Rob Sabino was also brought in and assisted with filtering their many ideas down into one song. The final track features all the classic disco elements - a 'disco-octaves' bass groove (one of Bernard's most impressive performances), funky guitar, strings, synths, horns, an impassioned vocal performance and lyrical content focused on dancing.

Nile Rodgers has noted in the past that 'Dance Dance Dance' was the first record to feature sub bass. Previously, lower frequencies had been removed from records during the mastering process, but Chic elected to keep them in. The result was a track that you could feel as well as hear in the clubs - each beat was a solid punch.

When released by Atlantic Records in October 1977, 'Dance Dance Dance' sold a million copies in its first month and quickly became a worldwide hit.

Song Lyrics

Lyrically, 'Dance Dance Dance' is loaded with double meaning. The lyrics were initially inspired by the film *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*, which documented the dance marathons of the post depression era. Poverty-stricken people would compete in the dance marathons, desperately hoping to win big cash prizes, while the audience looked on. The competitions were essentially tests of human endurance, and became highly controversial. The vocal refrain 'Yowsah Yowsah Yowsah' is taken from the film: it is the chant used by the compère during the dance marathons, designed to whip the crowd into a frenzy. The line was recorded by producer Kenny Lehman, who held his nose while he did it.

Dance
Dance, dance, dance
Keep on dancing
Dance
Dance, dance, dance

Just dancing to the beat
Feel the heat
I'm moving my feet
Headed towards the floor
Gonna get down
Get down some more

Rumba, el Tango
Latin hustle too
Yowsah, Yowsah, Yowsah
I wanna boogie wit' choo

Ooh, what a treat, feels so sweet
(Ah) That body heat
When I'm dancing with my baby, drives me crazy
Makes me hazy

Rumba, el Tango
Latin hustle too
Yowsah, Yowsah, Yowsah
I wanna boogie wit' choo

Dance
Dance, dance, dance (x4)
Dance
Dance, dance, dance
Keep on keep on
Dance
Dance, dance, dance
Keep on dancing

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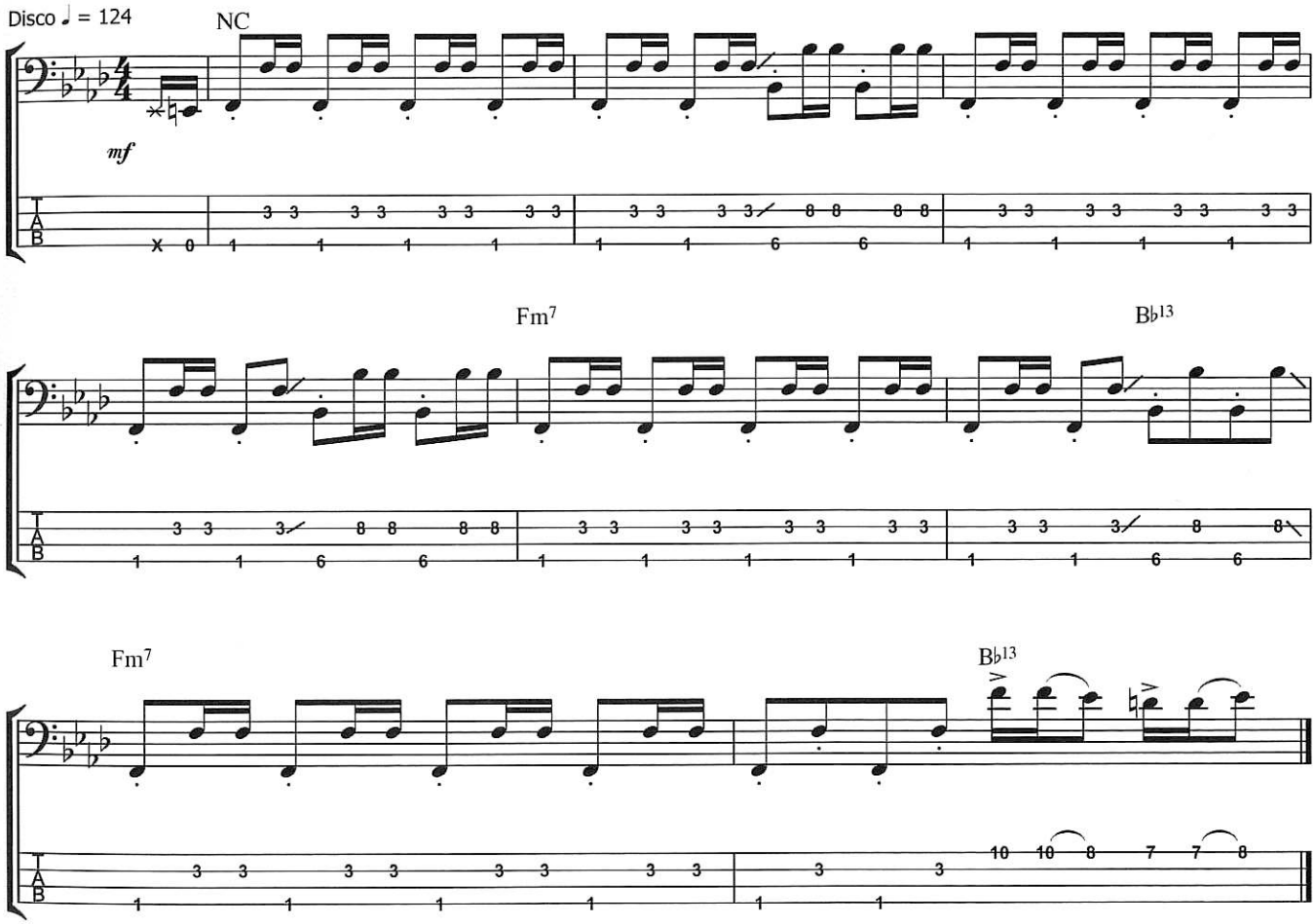
Bass Guitar

'Dance Dance Dance' features the first recorded preformance of Bernard's unusual picking technique, which you can read about on page 13. You can also play this groove with conventional fingerstyle technique, or use a pick. Bernard's bassline, which is harmonically very simple, is based on the 'disco-octave' lick, a common device often employed by bass players on disco songs. However, the quick tempo makes playing this line accurately for long periods of time a challenge. Bernard used his Fender Precision on this track.

Intro

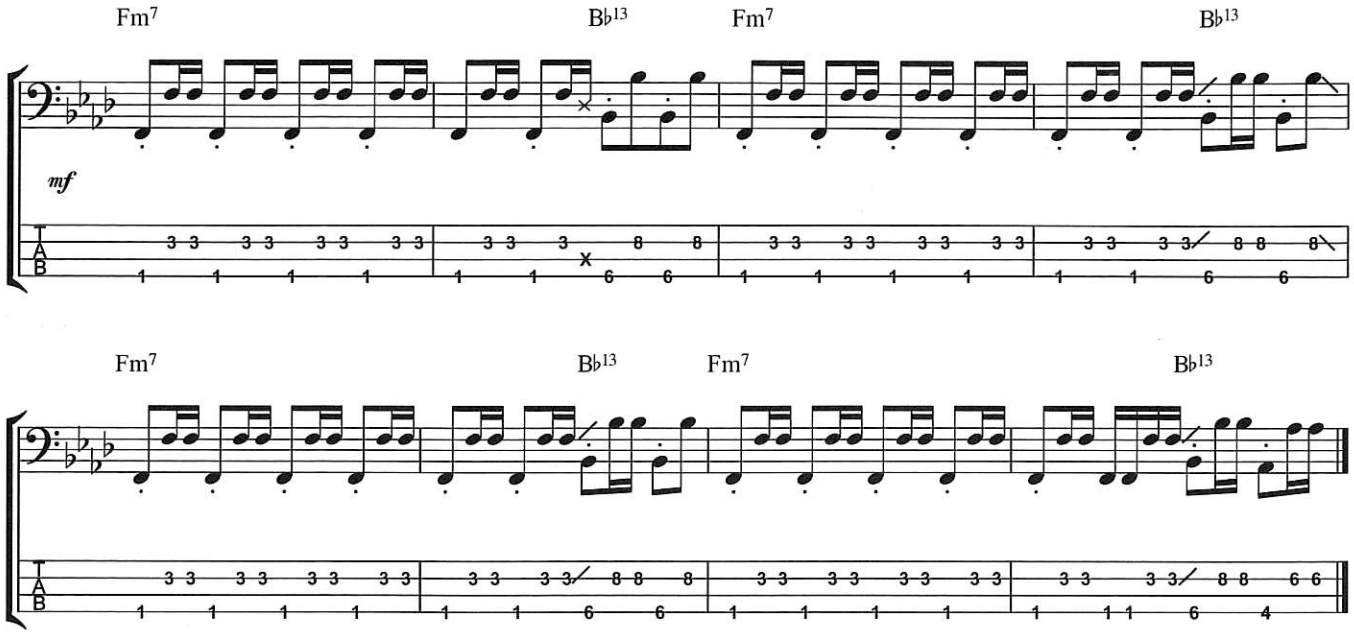
The intro to this song showcases Bernard's bass groove for the first eight bars. Try to keep each root note (on the E string) nice and short - they are marked with staccato marks in the score. You can hear Bernard slide up to the B♭ in the second half of the second bar of this repeating two bar phrase. The eight bar intro ends with an upper register fill played on the G string - be sure to play this fill quite aggressively.



Chapter 4 - Chic: Dance Dance Dance

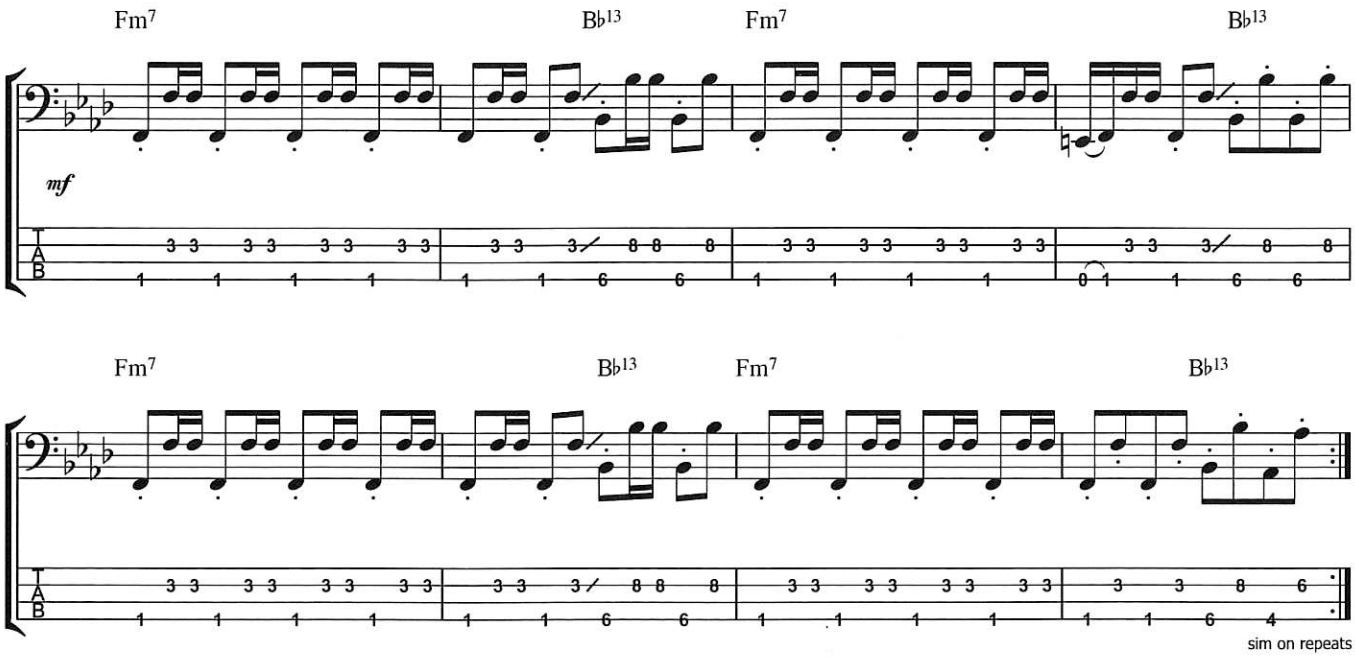
Chorus

The example below is a complete transcription of the first Chorus, which enters at CD time 0.16, and continues directly on from the previous example. For the most part this line is identical to the previous example, although Bernard does descend to the A♭ following the B♭ in the eighth bar.



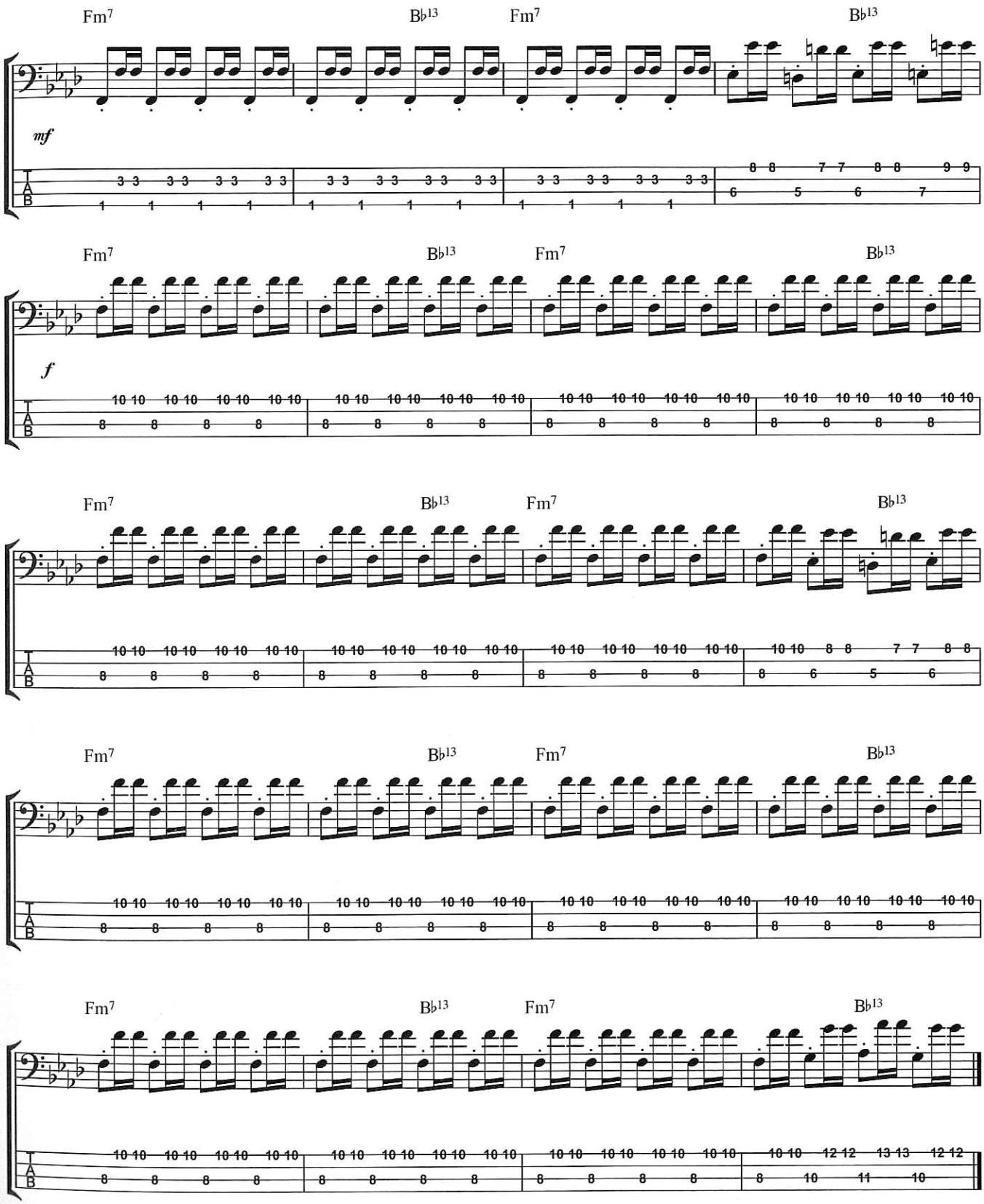
Verse

This is a complete transcription of the first Verse, which begins at CD time 0.31. Once again, there is little real variation here, aside from a brief hammer-on in the fourth bar, and the use of quavers rather than semiquavers in the fourth and eighth bars.



Chorus Variation

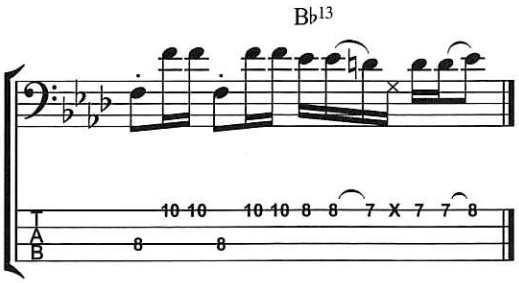
This example begins at CD time 3.30. At the end of the first line, Bernard plays a turnaround figure using the same octave lick, then ascends the neck to the F on the A string, and plays the lick from there. This adds considerable excitement to the track, especially since he continues to pedal the F while the chord changes to B♭13. There are several ascending and descending 'disco octave' licks in this example that are worthy of your attention.



Chapter 4 - Chic: Dance Dance Dance

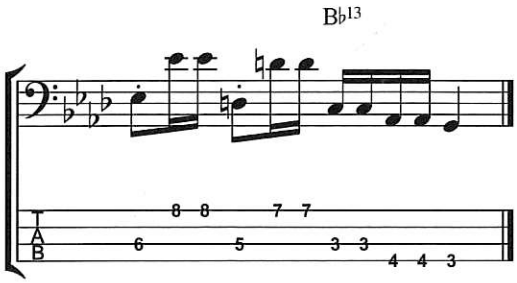
Variation 1

This is a fill that Bernard adds to the line at CD time 4.23, during the synth solo. This is very similar to the fill he played in the Intro to the song.



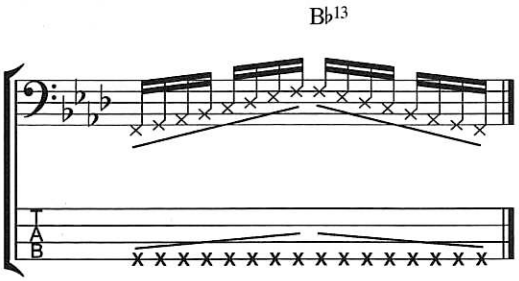
Variation 2

This variation occurs at CD time 4.54, at the end of the synth solo. Here Bernard descends from the higher F, down the neck ready to play the original line again.



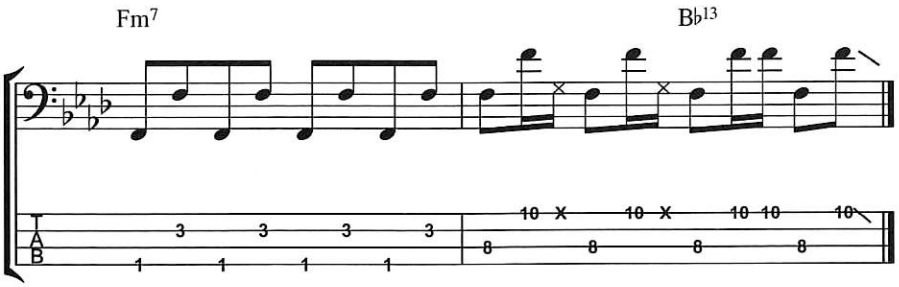
Variation 3

This fill occurs at CD time 5.02. Bernard plays a glissando up the neck for two beats, then down the neck for the last two beats. Pitches are not important here particularly, this is more about the effect of the glissando.



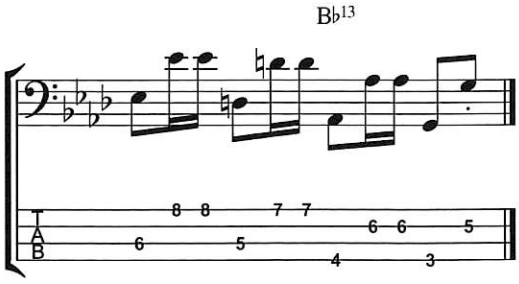
Variation 4

This variation comes at CD time 5.31. Bernard briefly ascends the neck again to play the octave groove in the higher position for just one bar.



Variation 5

This final bass variation occurs at CD time 5.57 and is a descending octave lick.

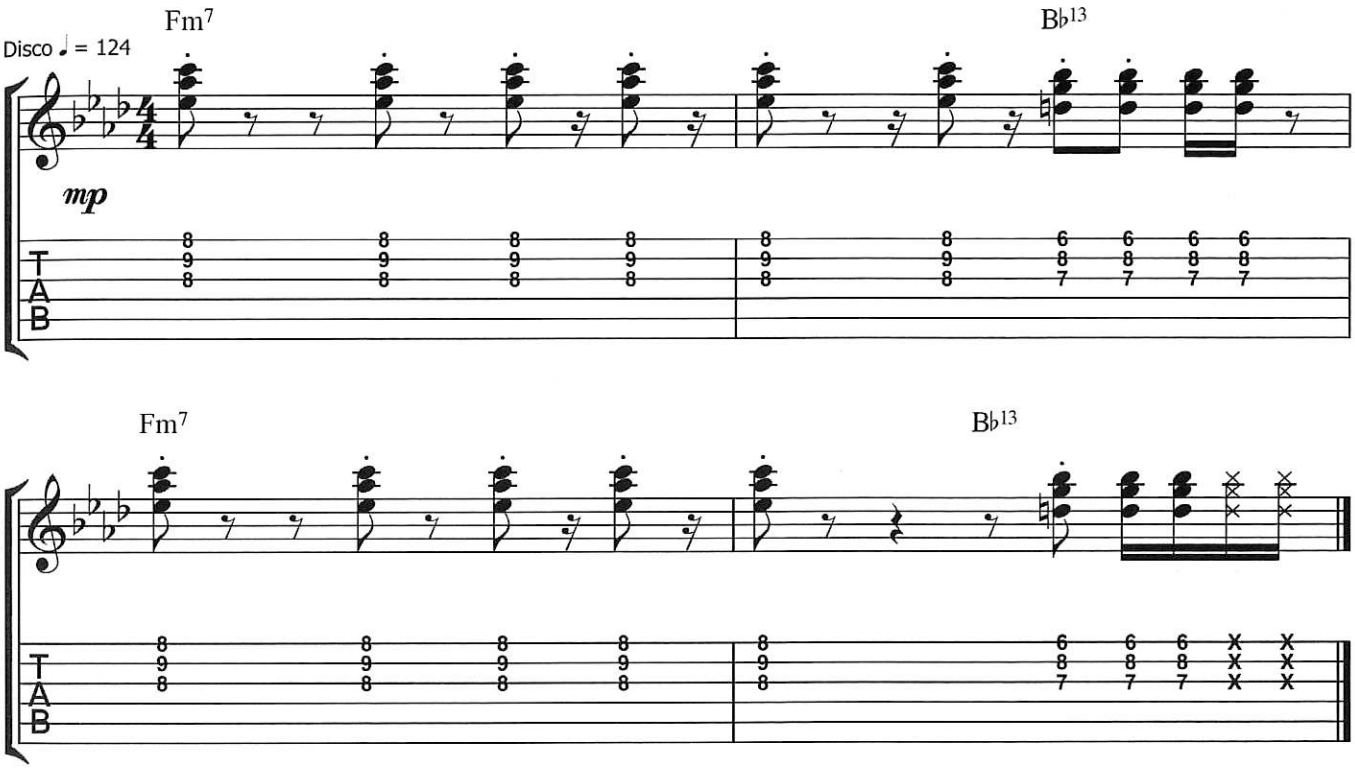


Guitar

Nile plays a fairly straightforward rhythm part on this song, which consists of a two chord groove throughout. He embellishes the main guitar groove significantly during the instrumental section.

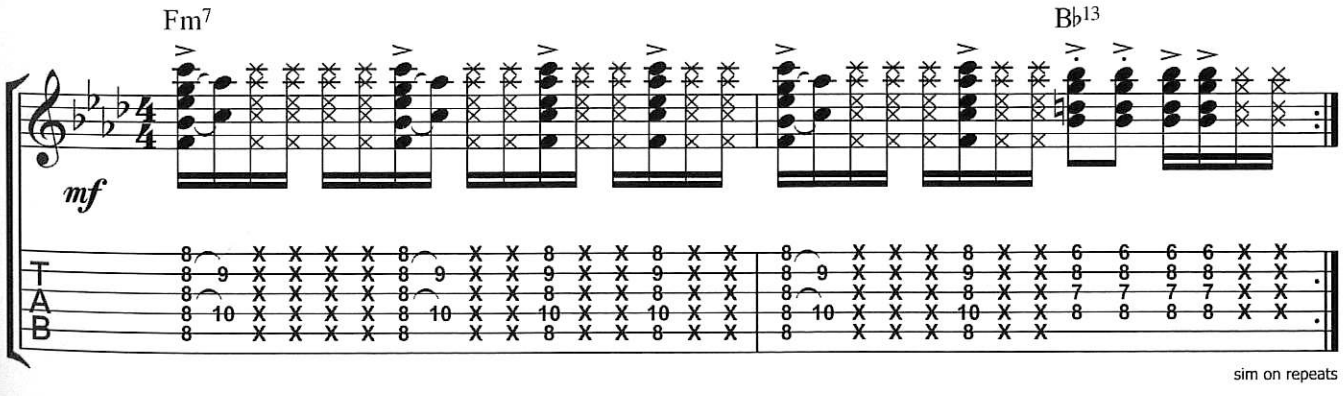
Intro

Nile's guitar enters after four bars of the bass intro. For the next four bars Nile quietly plays staccato chords using partial voicings on the top three strings.



Chorus/Verse

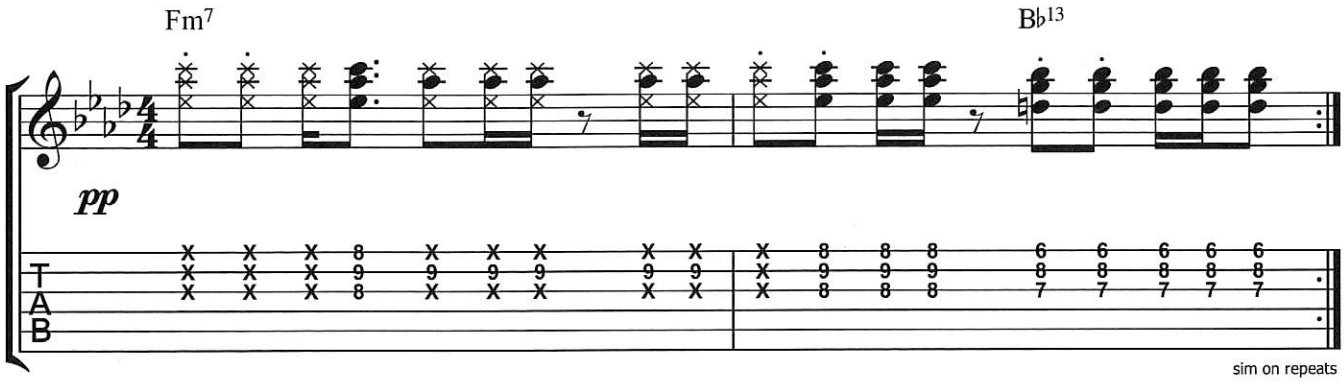
Throughout much of this song Nile plays a simple two chord vamp, which is transcribed below. This is used for the Verse and Chorus sections. On the Fm^7 chord Nile barres across the eighth fret with his first finger and hammers onto the fifth (C) and ♭3 (A♭) with his second and third fingers. This move is common in funk music. Notice that the chord voicings are now much fuller.



Chapter 4 - Chic: Dance Dance Dance

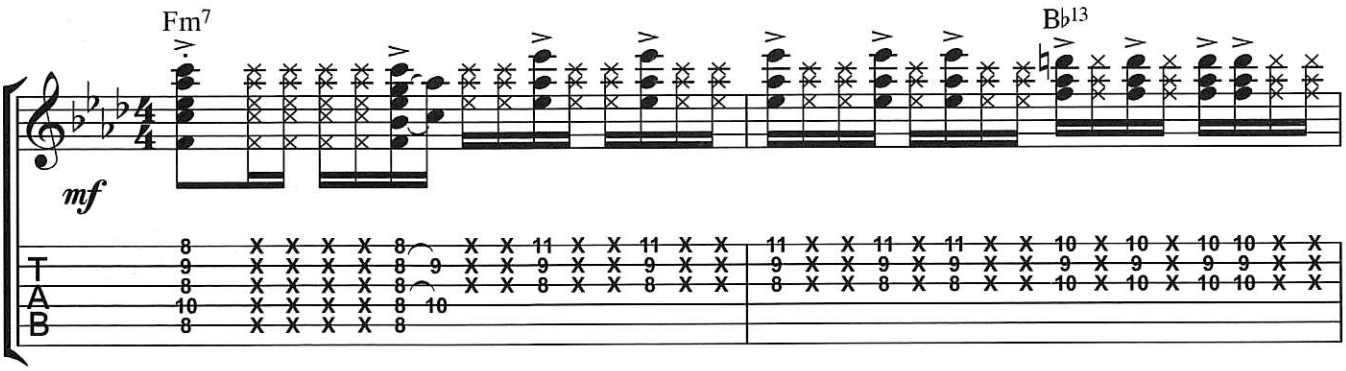
Breakdown Chorus

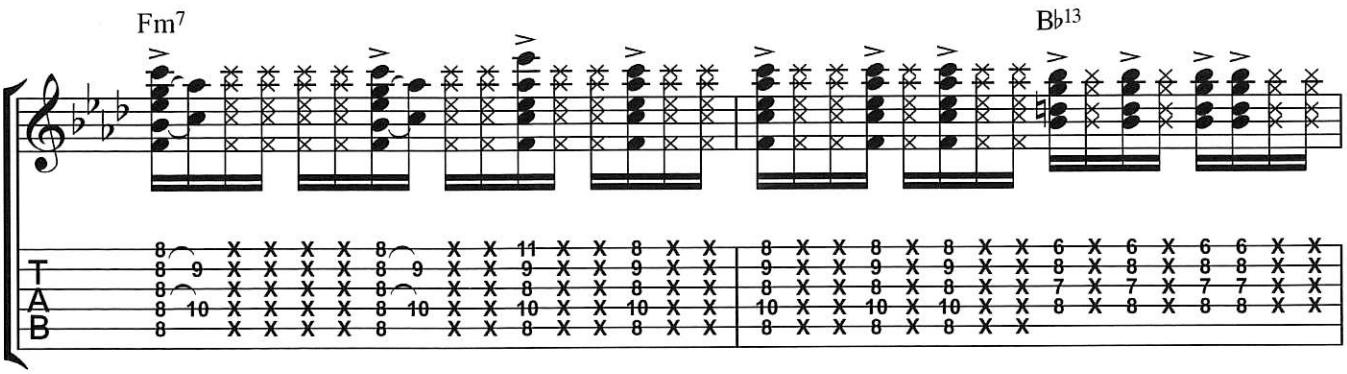
For the Breakdown Chorus, which occurs at CD time 2.05, all the instruments except the drums drop out. Nile re-enters after eight bars with the following part, which is based on the same chord shapes, and played very quietly.

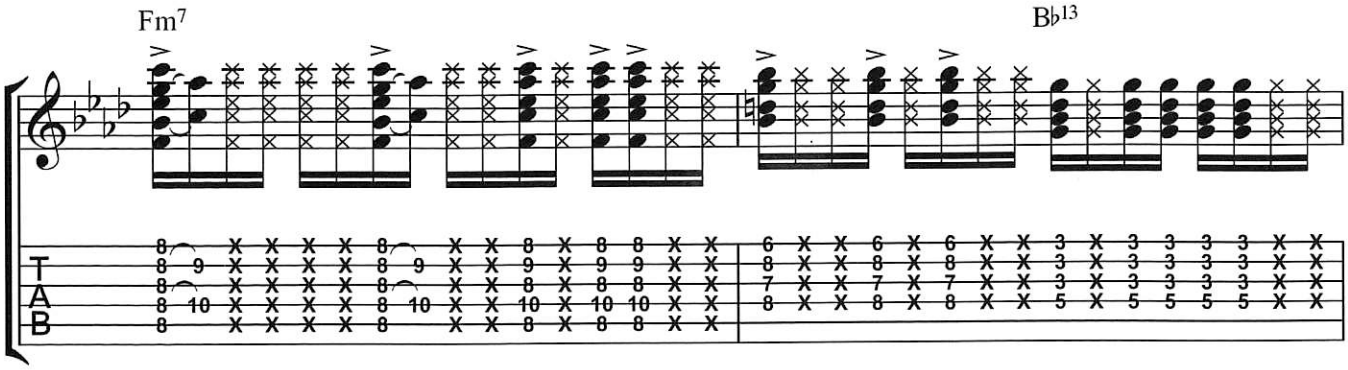


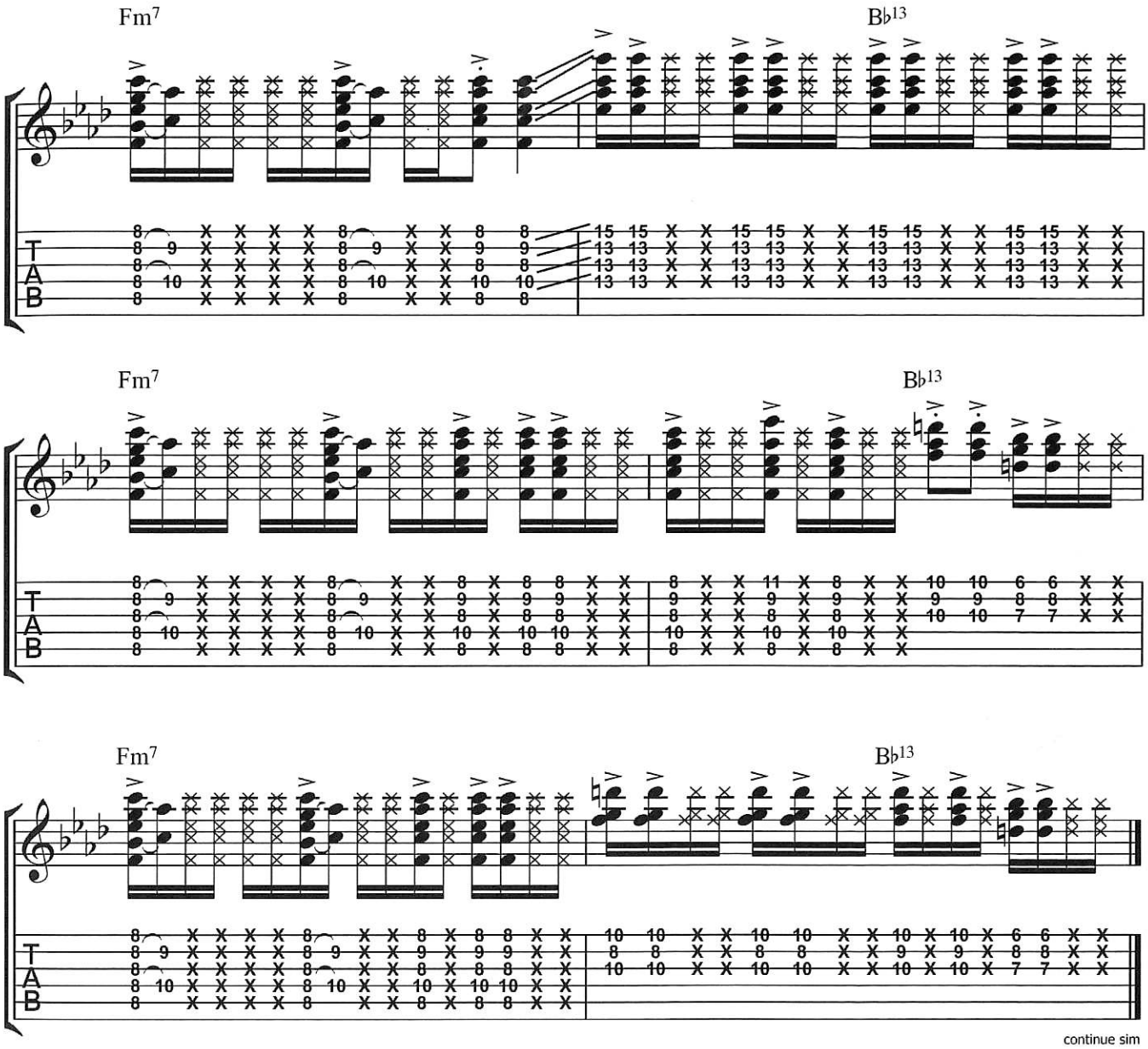
Instrumental Section

This transcription begins at CD time 5.27 and captures Nile's variations on the main guitar riff. Nile uses several different voicings for the B♭13 chord throughout this section. You don't have to play this section exactly as Niles does, but be sure to learn the variations so that you can add them into your own performance.

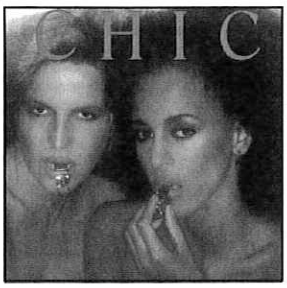







Fm7
B♭13
Fm7
B♭13
Fm7
B♭13
continue sim

Chapter 5
Everybody Dance



Artist: Chic
Album: *Chic*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: #9 UK Chart, #38 US Hot 100 Chart, #12 US R&B Chart

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'Everybody Dance' was one of the earliest songs written by Bernard and Nile, and was briefly envisioned to be part of the 'Manhattan Symphony', a disco medley that Nile toyed with after witnessing the success that Walter Murphy had with 'A Fifth Of Beethoven'. The song was recorded at the Hit Factory and Electric Lady studios with the help of DJ Robert Drake - Nile traded session playing for studio time in order to get a demo recorded. Soon after, Drake began playing the track at the nightclub he worked at, The Night Owl. It quickly became extremely popular on the dance floor and was a clear indication to Bernard and Nile that disco was where they should be focusing their efforts.

It was also while watching the crowd reaction to 'Everybody Dance' at the Night Owl that Nile noticed that many of the crowd had the same appearance: much of the clientele was made up of business people, who came directly to the club from work. Their sophisticated image was certainly appealing, and this, combined with Nile's fascination with the glamour of Roxy Music set the wheels in motion for the stylish and sophisticated look of Chic.

'Everybody Dance' was released in March 1978, and was Chic's second single, following on from the hugely successful 'Dance Dance Dance (Yowsah Yowsah Yowsah)'. While it didn't quite hit the peaks that its predecessor had, it was nevertheless a huge hit, reaching number 9 in the UK Charts, and number 12 in the US R&B Charts.

Song Lyrics

The lyrics to this song are classic Chic - the power of music and dancing were popular themes during the early disco movement, and Chic certainly embraced these themes in this song, as well as many others.

Everybody dance,
Clap your hands, clap your hands (x4)

Music never lets you down
Puts a smile on your face
Any time, any place
Dancing helps relieve the pain
Soothes your mind
Makes you happy again
Listen to those dancin' feet
Close your eyes and let go
But it don't mean a thing
If it ain't got that swing

Everybody dance,
Clap your hands, clap your hands (x4)

Spinning all around the floor
Just like Rogers and Astaire
Hoof all night without a care
Strutting to our favourite tune
The good times always end too soon

Everybody's dancin'
Let your feet have some fun
Come on, everybody, get on your feet
Clap your hands
Everybody's screamin'

Everybody dance,
Clap your hands, clap your hands (x4)

(Instrumental)

Everybody dance,
Clap your hands, clap your hands (x4)

(Instrumental)

Everybody dance,
Clap your hands, clap your hands (Repeat to Fade)

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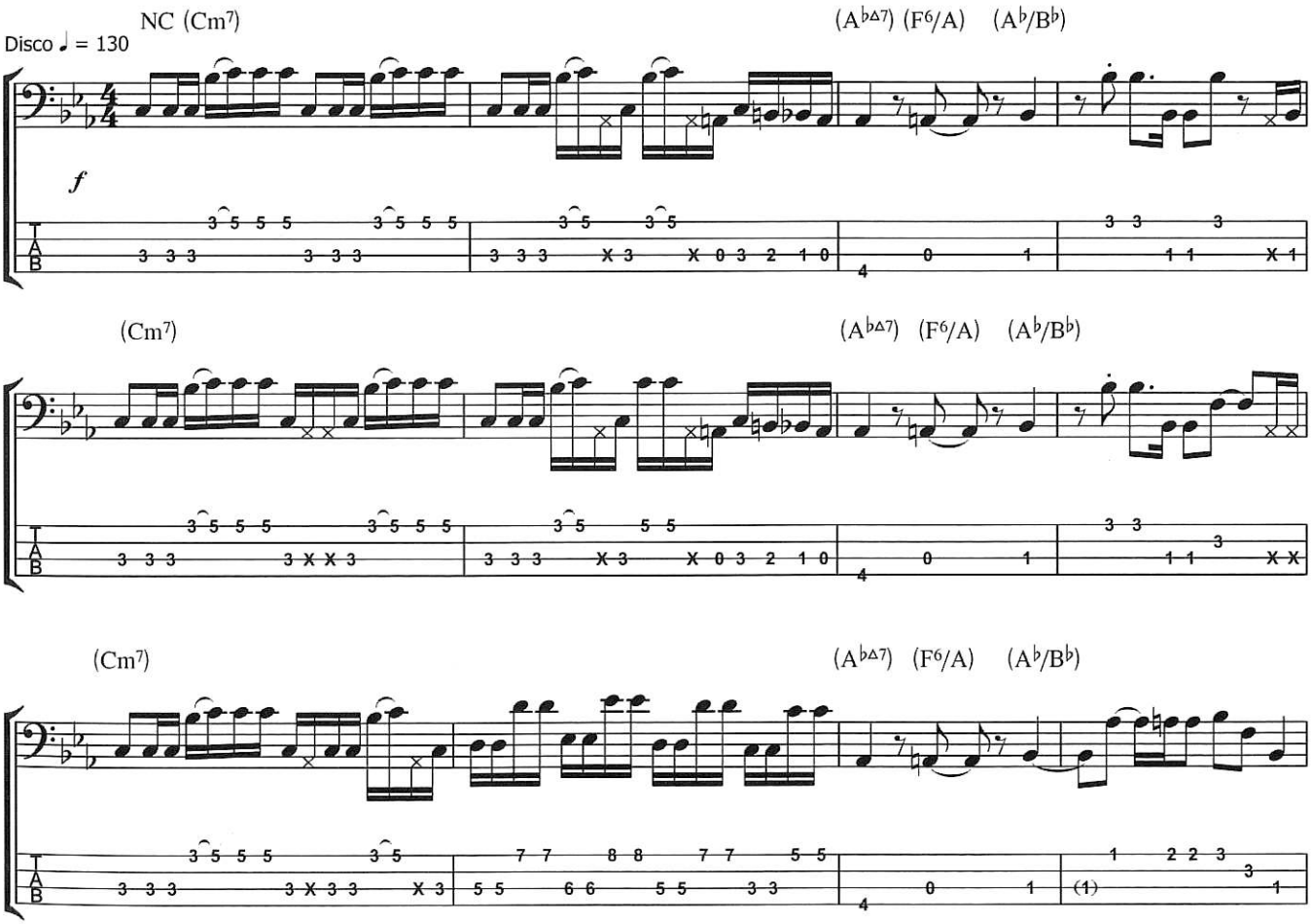
Bass Guitar

'Everybody Dance' is one of Bernard's most important and recognisable grooves and is truly a tour de force performance. Rumoured to have been recorded in just one take, the line features his unusual picking style, which can be heard clearly in the Intro to the song - try playing that groove with traditional fingerstyle technique! See page 13 for more on Bernard's unusual right hand technique. Bernard used his Fender Precision bass on this track.

Intro

The Intro features Bernard's main groove to the song and is played using his picking technique - because of the fast disco tempo (130bpm), this is really the only way of playing the line unless you either use a plectrum, or double thumb it as current Chic bassist Jerry Barnes does. The line is based around a 'disco-octave' figure that is embellished with a hammer-on from the ♭7 (B♭) to the octave (C). Ghost notes are crucial to the groove here. Check out Bernard's great chromatic descending run at the end of the second bar. For the third bar he just plays root notes for the jazz-influenced chords. Notice how he creates a chromatic line by playing the F^6 chord in first inversion - F^6/A. In the fourth bar of the line he plays a simple fill using the root and octave of the B♭/A♭ chord. Each time this bar comes around Bernard plays something slightly different, usually using chord tones, but you should also check out his chromatic fill in the twelfth bar - this mirrors the ascending bass figure he plays in the third bar of the sequence.

Bernard moves into a simpler groove, still based on the same chord sequence, in bars 17 - 24. This is the same line as used in the Chorus, and sets up the first reading of the Chorus nicely. The following transcription is of the entire Intro section leading up to the first Chorus.



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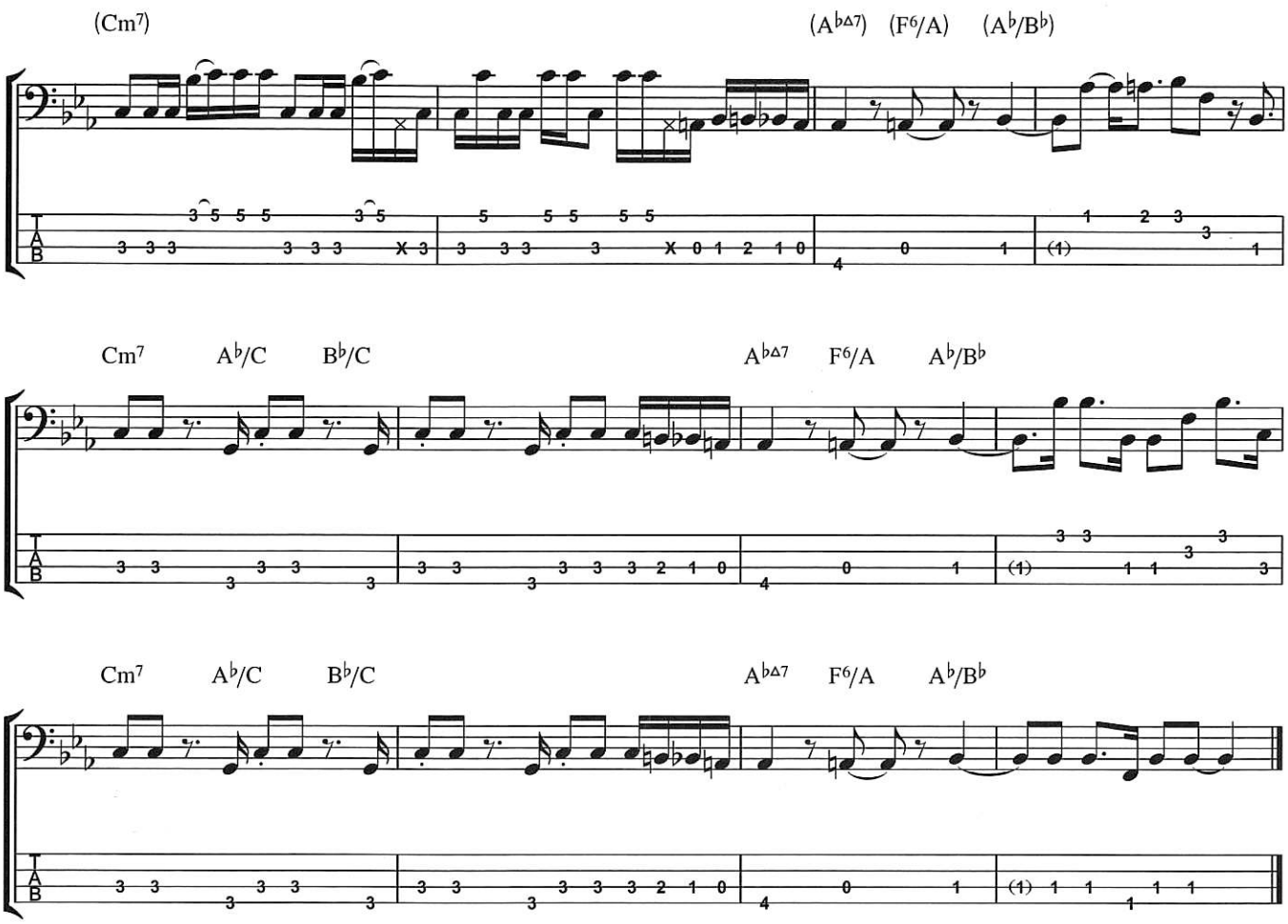
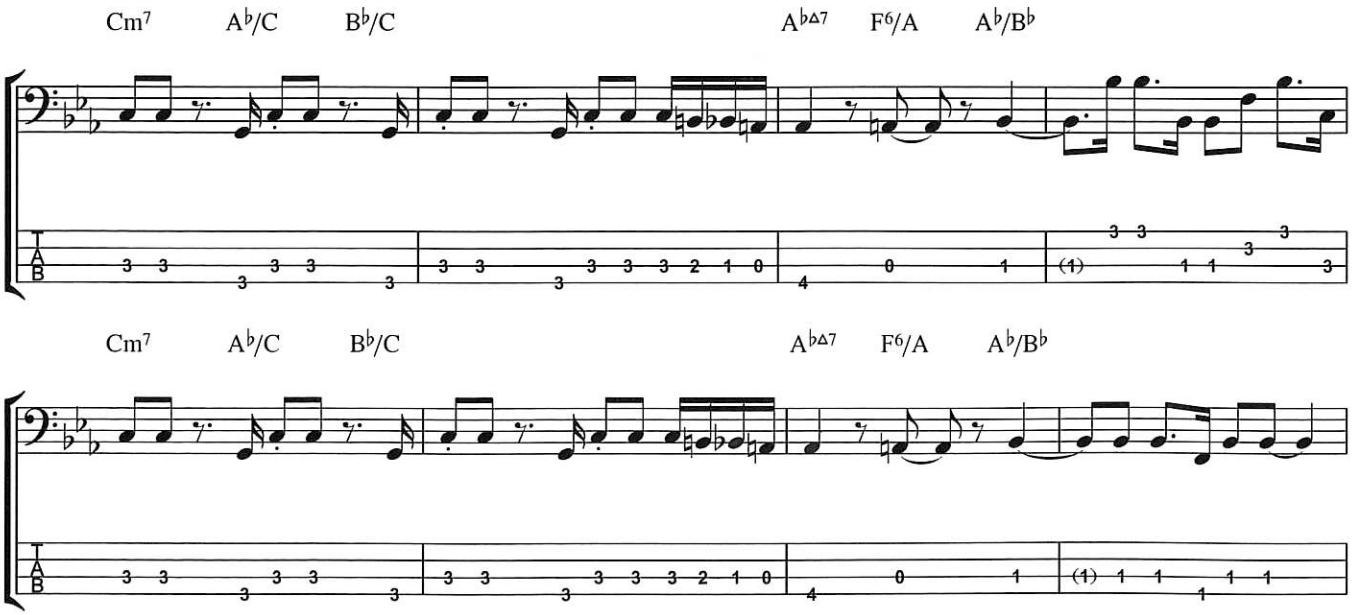
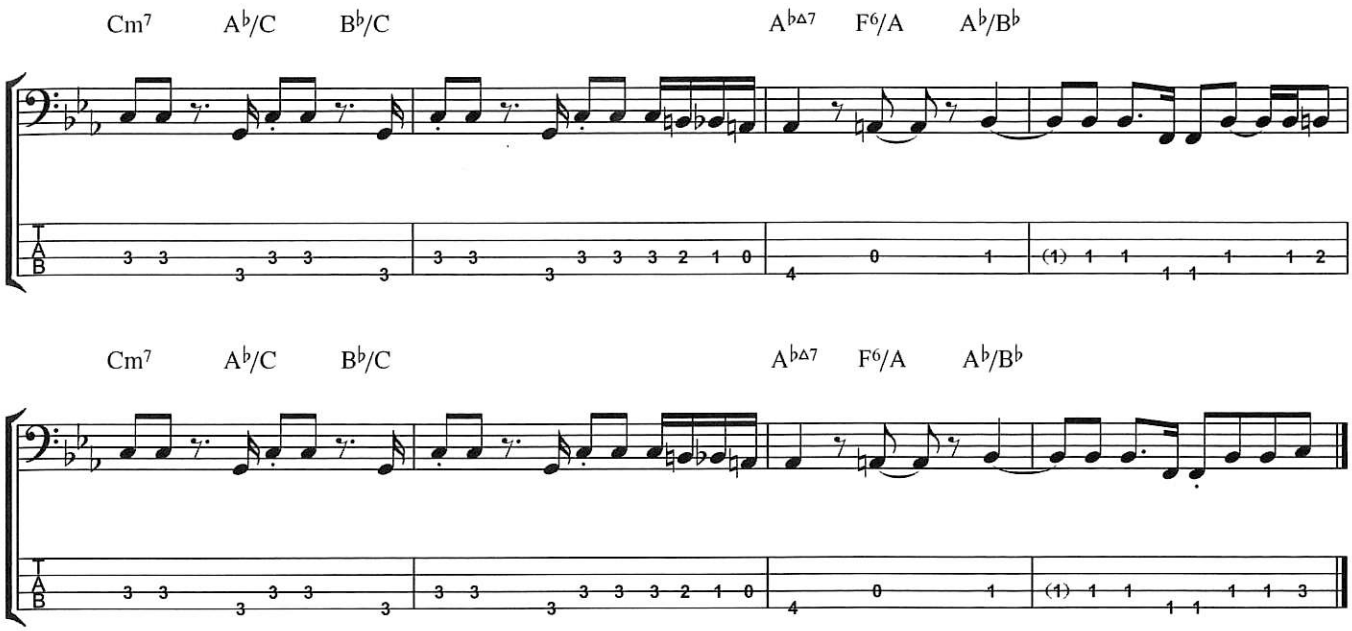


Chorus

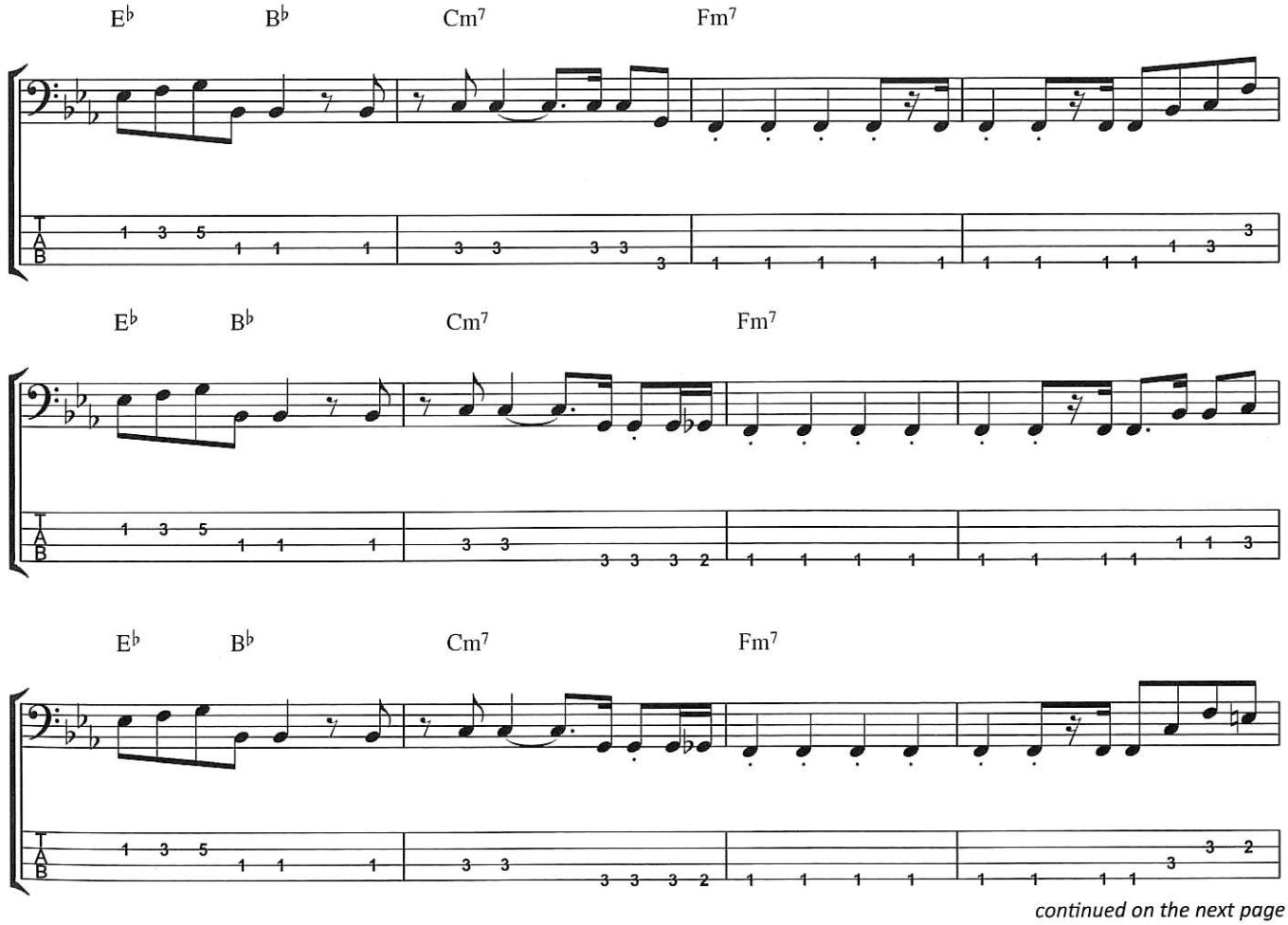
The following example is a complete transcription of the first Chorus, which begins at CD time 0.45, and follows on directly from the last example. Here, Bernard plays the same groove as found in the last eight bars of the previous example, but with alternative fills in the fourth bar of the repeating four bar sequence.





Verse

Bernard plays a rather melodic line during the Verse. This groove follows the chord progression closely. Check out Bernard's four-note figure over the E♭ chord - he manages to hit each of the three important chord tones with his melodic line, reinforcing the harmony at the same time as playing an interesting line. Note the use of staccato and sixteenth note anticipations in the Fm7 bars - both are common in Bernard's basslines. Also note his descending chromatic line in the twelfth bar.



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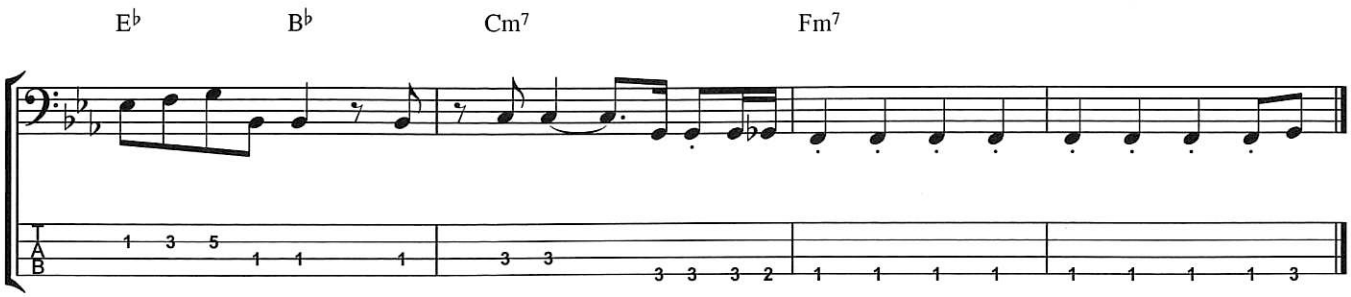
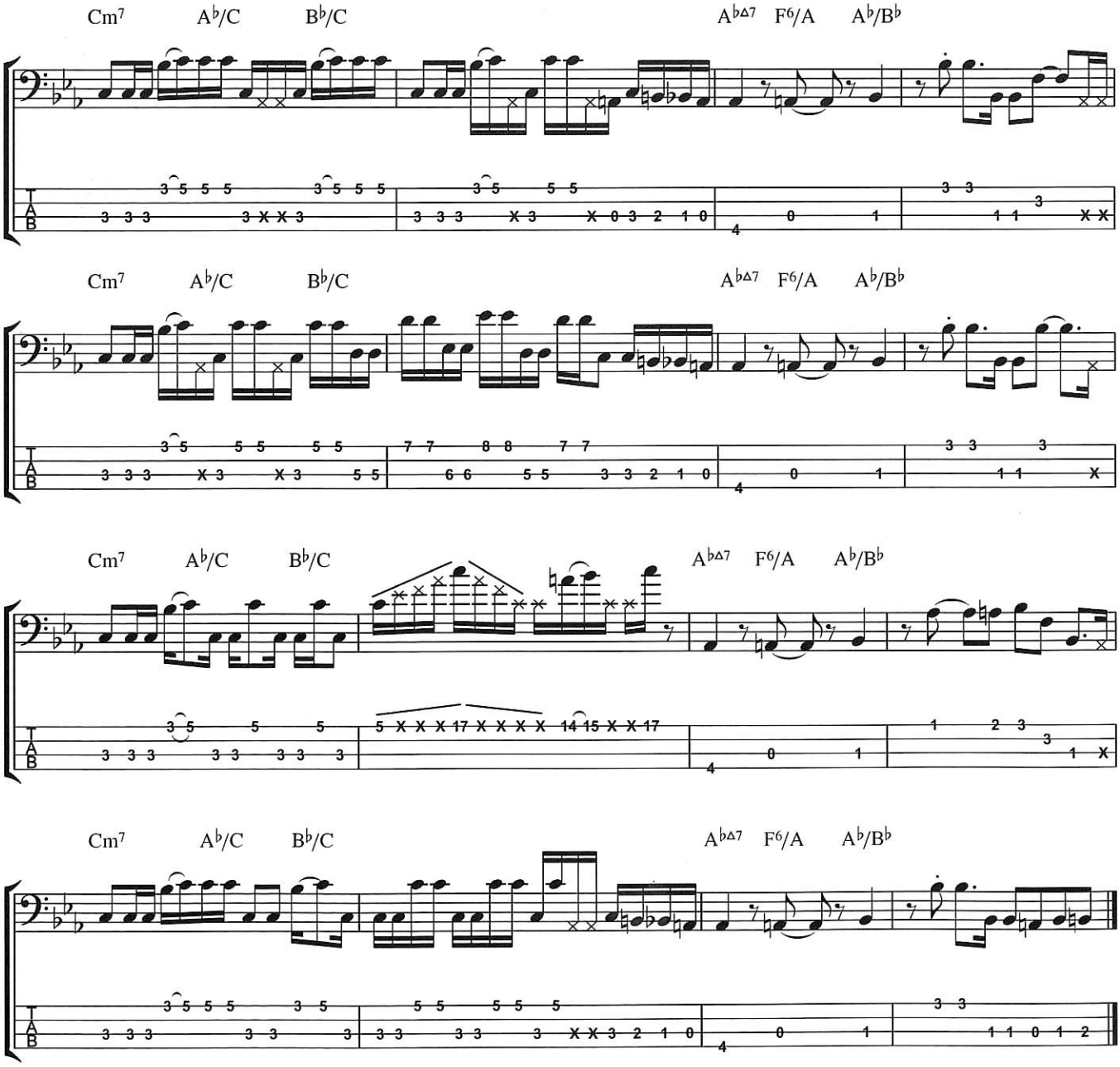
Chapter 5 - Chic: Everybody Dance



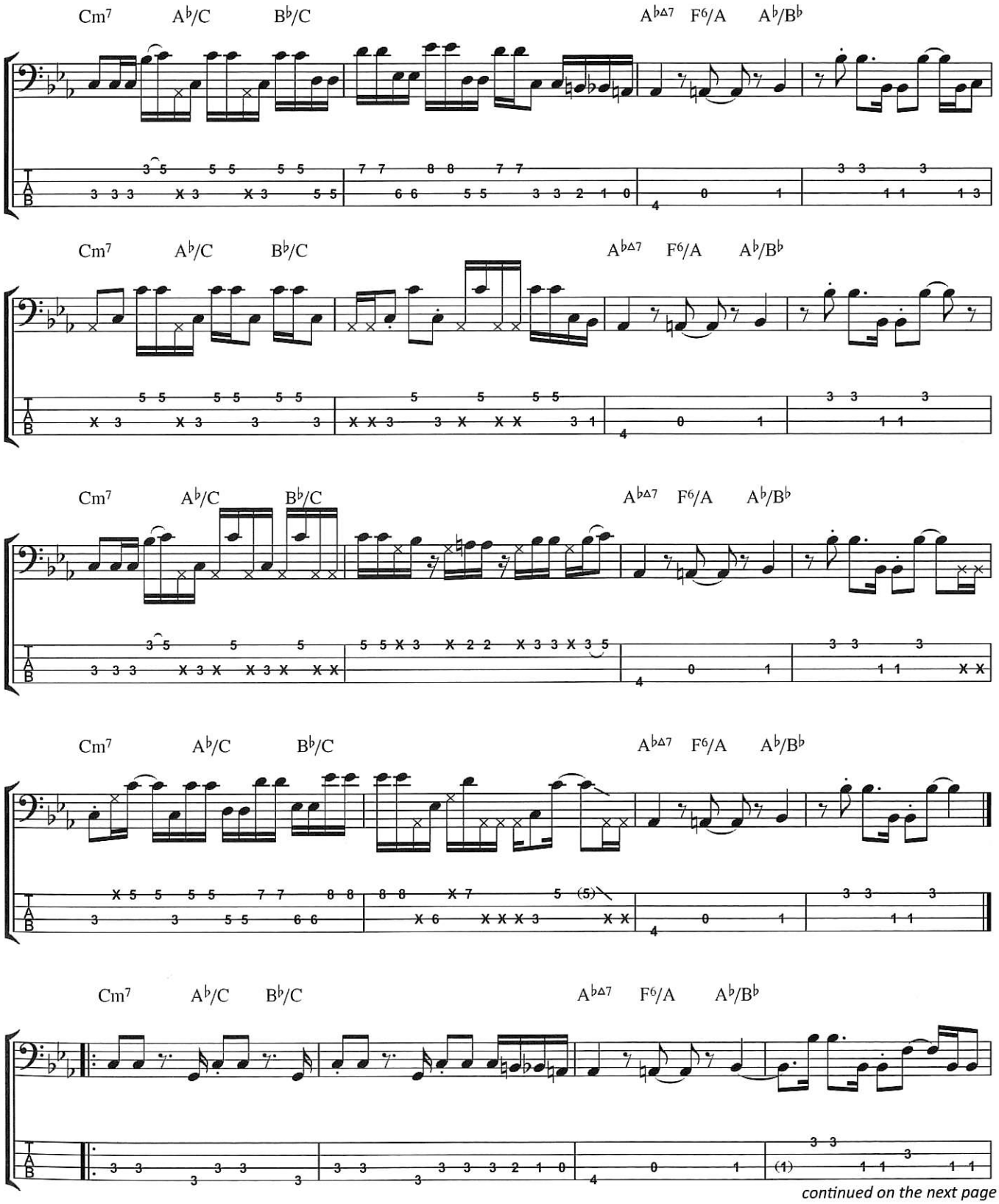
Chorus Variations

This is a transcription of the third Chorus, which occurs at CD time 3.46. Bernard starts to embellish his opening groove significantly here. Of particular note are his ascending 'disco-octave' figure in bars 5 and 6, and his glissando fill in bar 10. the first half of this fill in essentially played by sliding quickly up the G string to the C at the seventeenth fret, then back down again, picking in the sixteenth note rhythm indicated. Actual pitches are not especially important - this fill is more about the glissando effect than the notes themselves.



Guitar Harmony Section

This example begins at CD time 5.01 and features more embellishments on the main groove. We have a couple of slightly different takes on the ascending 'disco-octave' lick, as seen in the previous example, and a nice fill in bar 10. It's not important for you to play all these fills in the exact same place as Bernard since the line is quite improvisational in nature. You should however, learn all the best fills and be sure to incorporate them into your performance.



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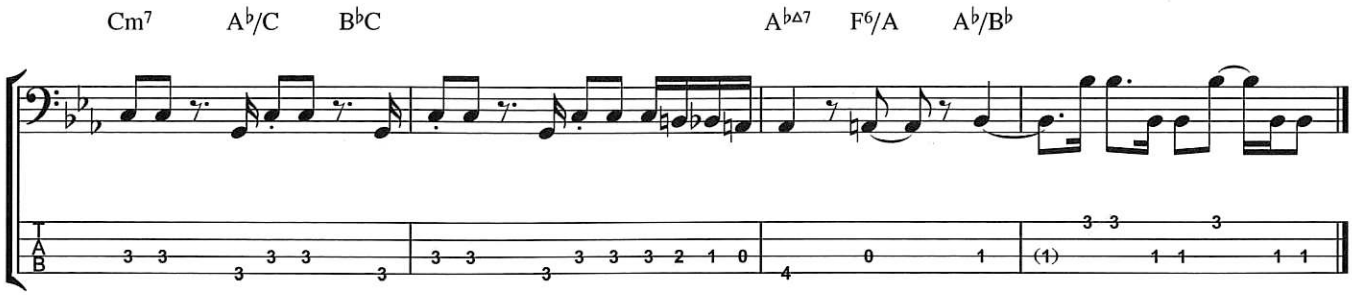
Chapter 5 - Chic: Everybody Dance

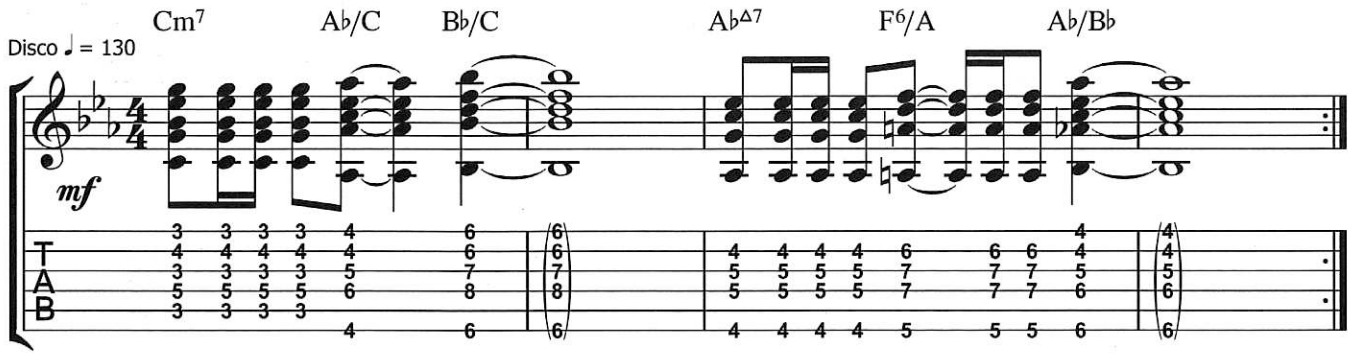


Guitar

'Everybody Dance' is a real showcase for Nile's guitar playing since there are several different parts, all of which feature various elements of his playing. There is a rhythm guitar part, which demonstrates his jazz-influenced chord voicings, a melody part which is played with a wah pedal, and finally two overdubbed guitar parts playing a harmonised melody - plenty to get your teeth into.

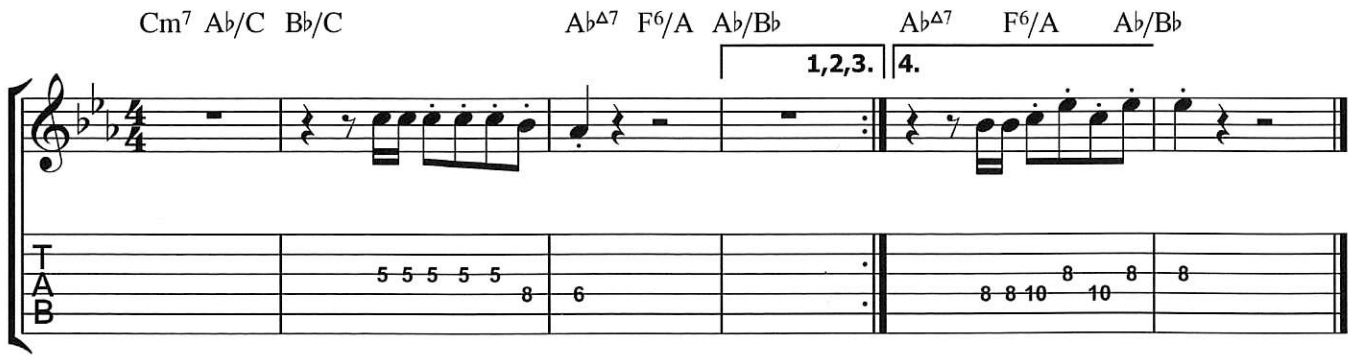
Intro/Chorus

Nile's guitar enters after the lengthy bass intro, and plays the following chordal part. Nile's voicings for this progression are fantastic, particularly for the $A^{\flat\Delta7}$, F^6/A and $A^\flat/B^\flat$ chords. Nile plays most of the part fairly straight, just adding in some rhythmic excitement in bars 3 and 4.



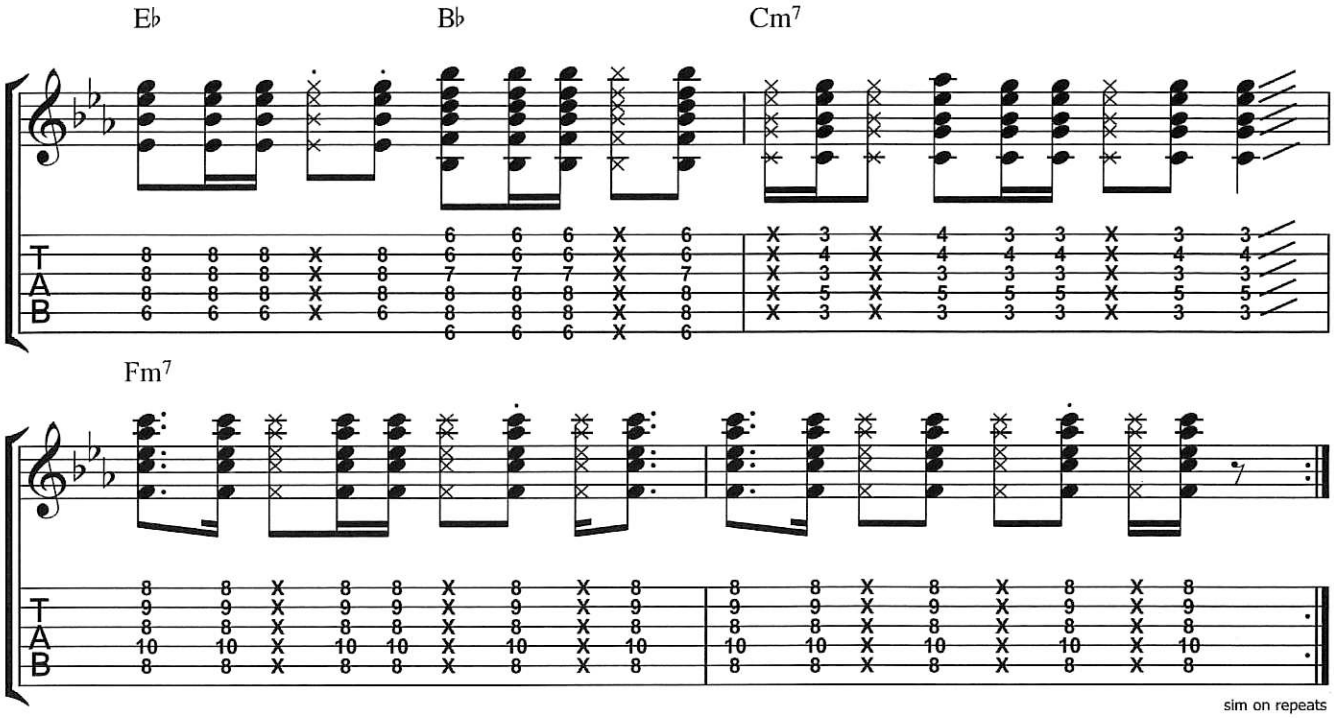
Chorus (Guitar 2)

This single note line can be heard during the Chorus, starting from the Chorus after the first Verse. Nile mimics the vocal line with this single note phrase, adding weight to one of the 'hooks' of the tune. It's possible to incorporate this line into the chordal part for the Chorus if you're feeling adventurous. This transcription is from the second Chorus, starting at CD time 2.46, and includes an extra fill in the fourth time bar.



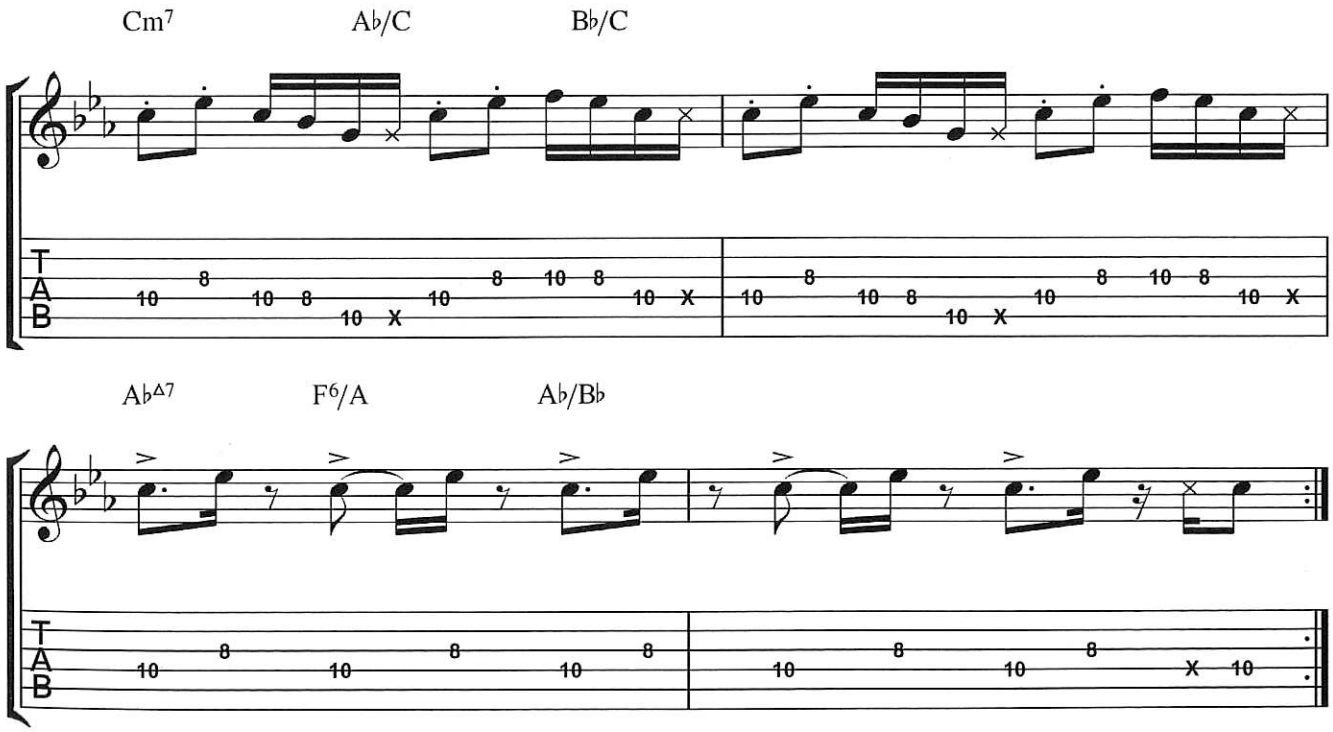
Verse

Nile plays standard chord voicings during the Verse, but keeps the rhythm very active. The following example is a transcription of the first four bars of the Verse - Nile plays similar rhythms on the repeats, and occasionally adds the ♭7 to the top of the Fm7 chord. This note, E♭, can be found at the eleventh fret of the top E string and can easily be played with the little finger.



Guitar Interlude Section

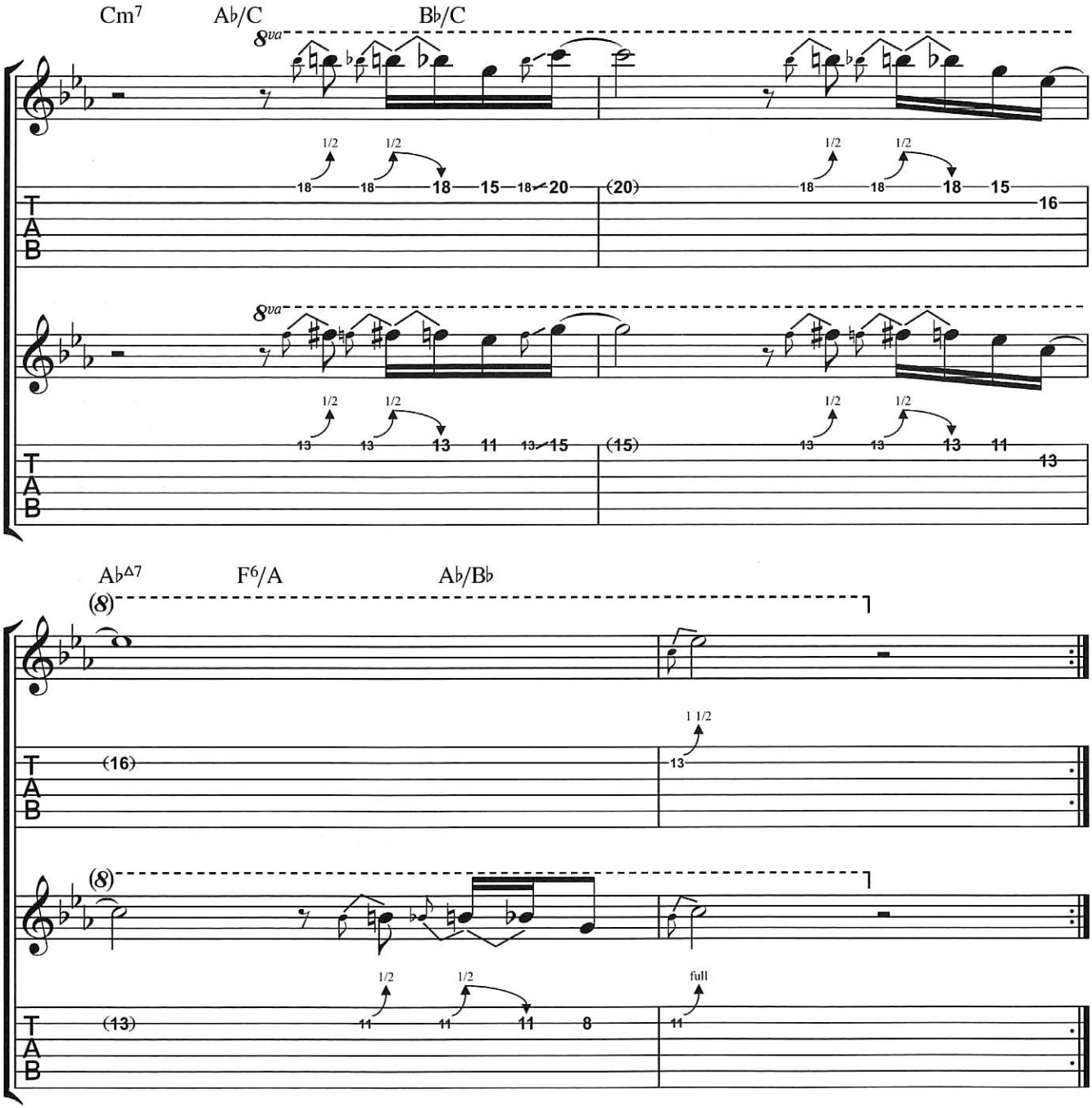
This section occurs at a couple of different points during the song - first at CD time 4.16. Here Nile plays a melody in unison with the keys, although he adds muted phrases in between the main melody notes - the line on beats 2 and 4 of the first two bars is only played by the guitar, and should be played a little quieter than the main melody. This line is varied slightly and played with a wah pedal later in the song.



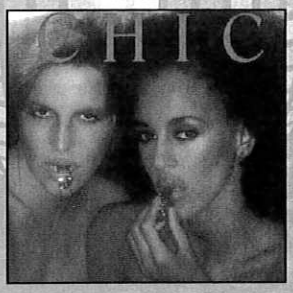
Chapter 5 - Chic: Everybody Dance

Guitar

This section can be heard at CD times 5.00 and 6.58. Here Nile plays a simple melody which he then harmonises with an additional guitar part. Bends and slides are put to good use here, and it's possible that the higher part was performed with a slide. Guitarist Eddie Martinez, one of Nile's oldest friends also played on this track, so it's possible that he played one of these parts.



Chapter 6
Strike Up The Band



Artist: Chic
Album: *Chic*
Written By: Bernard Edwards/Nile Rodgers/Kenny Lehman
Chart Positions: Non single

'Strike Up The Band' is one of the first songs that Bernard and Nile wrote together, and is from Chic's self-titled 1977 debut album. The idea behind the song was that it would be an introduction piece for the band, a kind of anthem. With drummer Tony Thompson providing a firm foundation with his solid drum pattern, the track certainly provides Bernard and Nile with ample opportunity to show off their funk chops. Notable for its Intro, which is a brief passage arranged for just horns, 'Strike Up The Band' is predominantly an instrumental, with the exception of the Chorus. The 'Verse' section features a melody played by the flute and guitar in unison. In many ways, the song sounds like an homage to the Boz Scaggs song 'Lowdown', which features a similar groove and the use of a flute playing the main melody.

Song Lyrics

The lyrics to 'Strike Up The Band' are minimal since only the Chorus has lyrics - the Verse sections are instrumental. The lyrics serve as a celebration of the band, and music in general.

Strike up, up the band
Makin' music is our plan
Got to feel the rhythm if you can
Just wanna strike up, up the band

(Instrumental)

Strike up, up the band
Makin' music is our plan
Got to feel the rhythm if you can
Just wanna strike up, up the band

(Instrumental)

Strike up, up the band
Makin' music is our plan
Got to feel the rhythm if you can
Just wanna strike up, up the band

Strike up, up the band
Makin' music is our plan
Got to feel the rhythm if you can
Just wanna strike up, up the band

Got to feel the rhythm
Got to feel the rhythm
Got to feel the rhythm

Strike up, up the band
Makin' music is our plan
Got to feel the rhythm if you can
Just wanna strike up, up the band

Strike up, up the band
Makin' music is our plan
Got to feel the rhythm if you can
Just wanna strike up, up the band

(Repeat to Fade)

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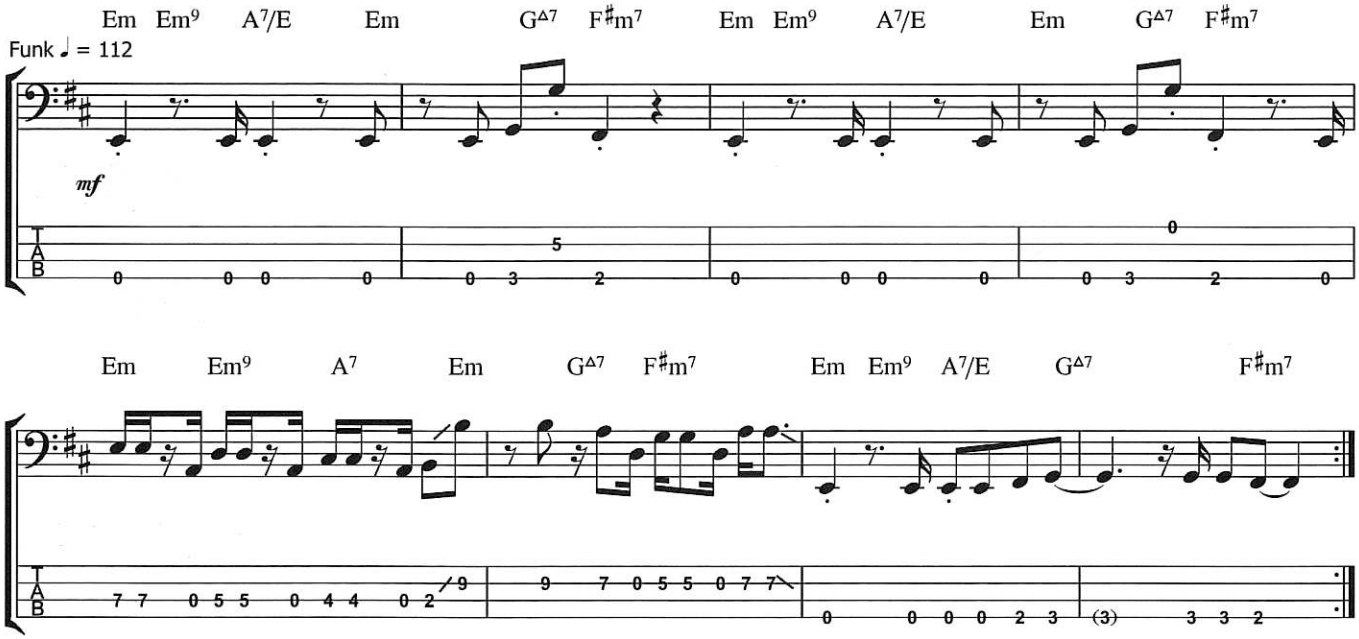
Chapter 6 - Chic: Strike Up The Band

Bass Guitar

'Strike Up The Band' is an excellent showcase for Bernard's groove playing. His subtle but effective grooves are bolstered by several ear-grabbing lines and a fantastic Breakdown section which showcases his funk chops. Bernard opts for standard fingerstyle throughout this tune, although it sounds as though he may have employed his trademark 'plectrum' technique during the fingerstyle section (see page 13 for more on this technique). It sounds as though Bernard used his Fender Precision Bass on this song.

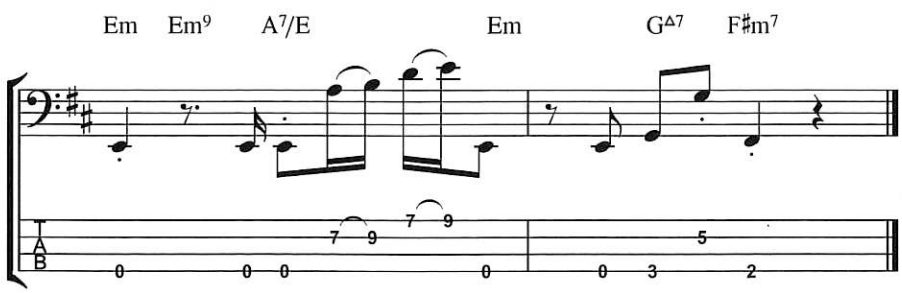
Intro/Chorus

Bernard's part for the Chorus is a relatively simple groove. Note how in the second and fourth bars he plays a G and F♯ effectively altering the bass notes of the chords and making them $G^{\Delta 7}$ and $F\sharp m^7$. As is typical of most of Bernard's grooves, this line contains a real standout moment - in this case it's the descending line in the fifth bar. Bernard plays the root (E) and ♭7 (D) of the Em^9 chord, followed by C♯, the third of the A^7 chord, before ending up on a fill based around B, the fifth of the Em^9 chord. Try to keep this fill fluid, and be sure to play the slides as written. It's also important to play the staccato marks as indicated throughout this line since as always, they are crucial to the feel.



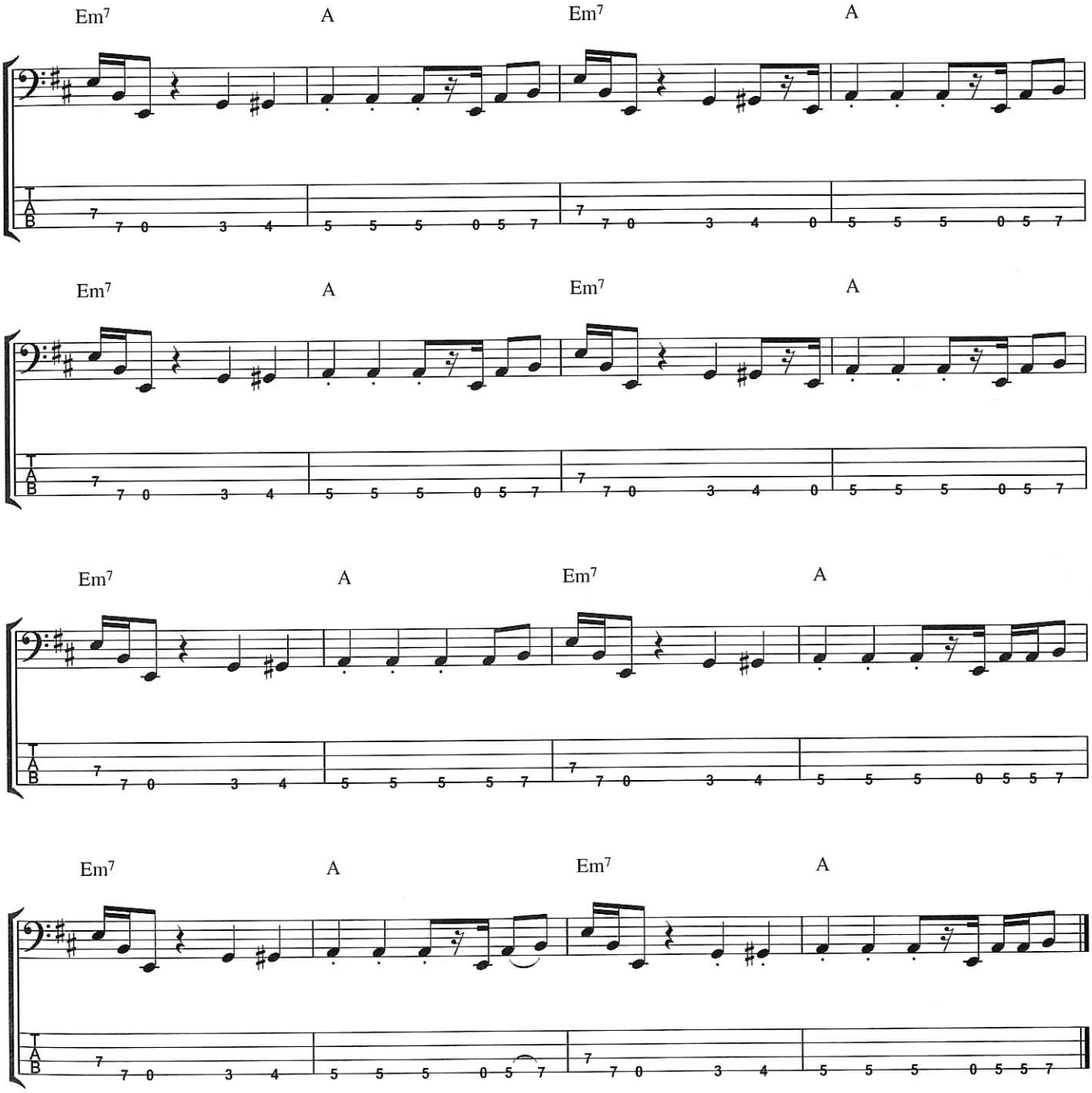
Chorus Variation 1

This variation occurs at the beginning of the fourth time through the Chorus after the Breakdown, at CD time 4.13. Bernard plays a sixteenth note hammer-on figure based on the E minor pentatonic scale.



Verse

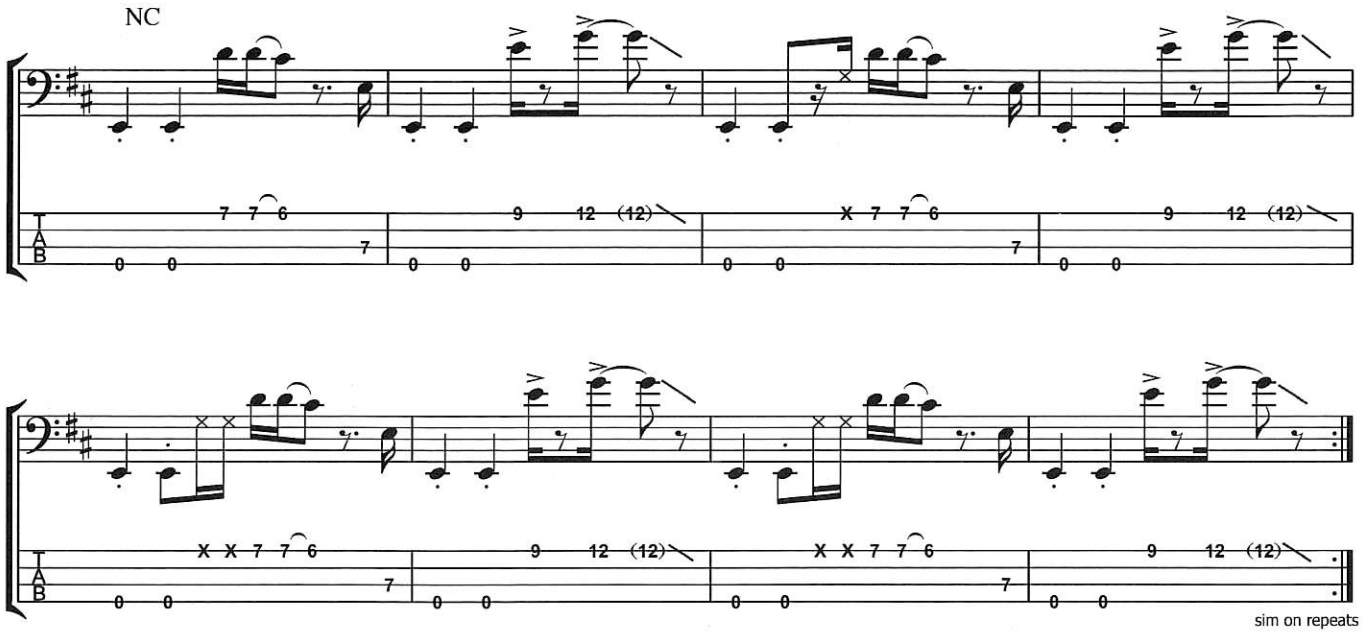
During the 'Verse', Bernard plays a tight, minimalistic groove. He begins each two-bar phrase with a descending figure that moves from E, down to B, down to the low E - the octave, fifth and root of the Em^7 chord. He then walks up to the A^7 chord via the G (♭3 of the Em^7 chord) and G♯, a passing note. Once on the A^7 chord he plays staccato root notes, finishing off with a simple figure that takes him up to B, setting up a 'dominant approach' that leads nicely back to the Em^7 chord. Throughout the line there are occasional sixteenth note anticipations as you can see from the transcription below, which is the first Verse section in its entirety. These anticipations, which can also be played as ghost notes can easily be added at many points in the line, although Bernard uses them sparingly.



Chapter 6 - Chic: Strike Up The Band

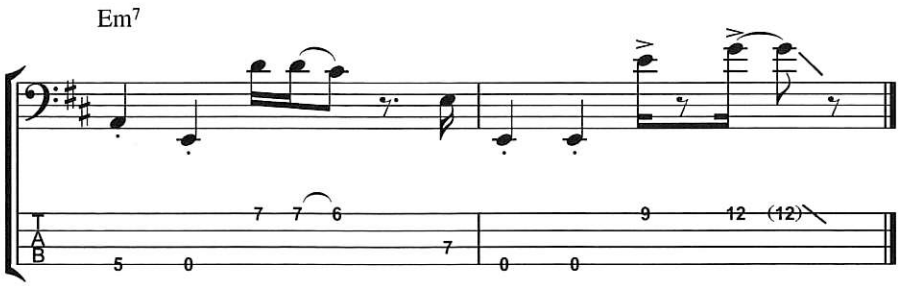
Breakdown

The Breakdown section for this song is really a chance for Nile and Bernard to shine. Bernard sets up a two-bar funk groove based around the Em^7 chord. It sounds as if he used his unique picking technique during this section - this is especially evident in bar 5 where he plays two ghost notes on the G string, followed by two D's on the same string. A picking technique of some kind is by far the best way to play this part. The high E and G in the second bar of the vamp can be plucked quite aggressively, as you can hear Bernard doing on the record.



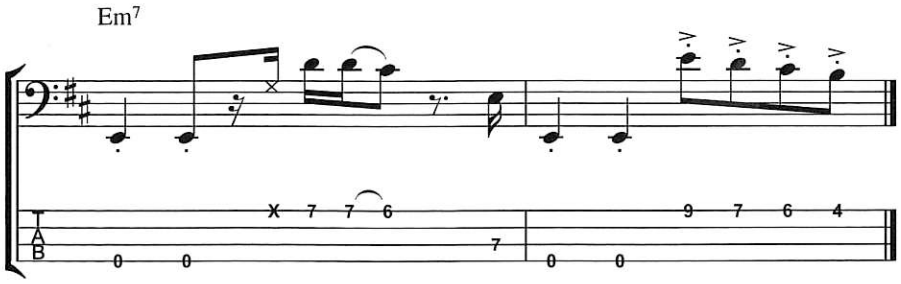
Breakdown Variation 1

In this variation on the two-bar vamp, Bernard plays an A on beat one. This briefly makes the listener think the chord is going to change to A^7, but Bernard moves back to E on the second beat, firmly rooting us back in Em^7 territory once again. This variation occurs at CD time 2.44, just after the guitar enters.



Breakdown Variation 2

This variation comes at CD time 3.09. Here Bernard plays a descending figure on the G string at the end of the second bar. This comes at the end of a four bar cycle and should be played staccato, and aggressively.

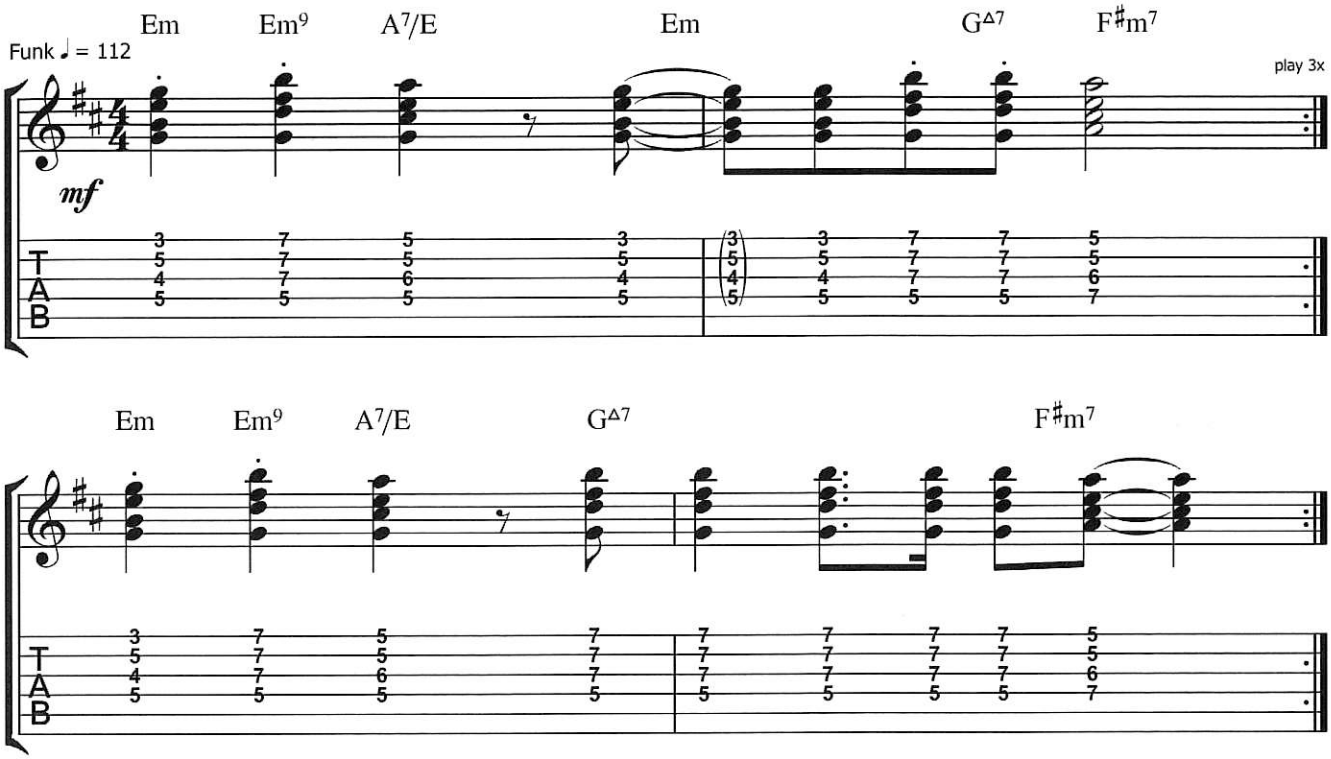


Guitar

Throughout most of 'Strike Up The Band' Nile keeps his guitar part relatively simple. The Breakdown section however features some seriously funky playing.

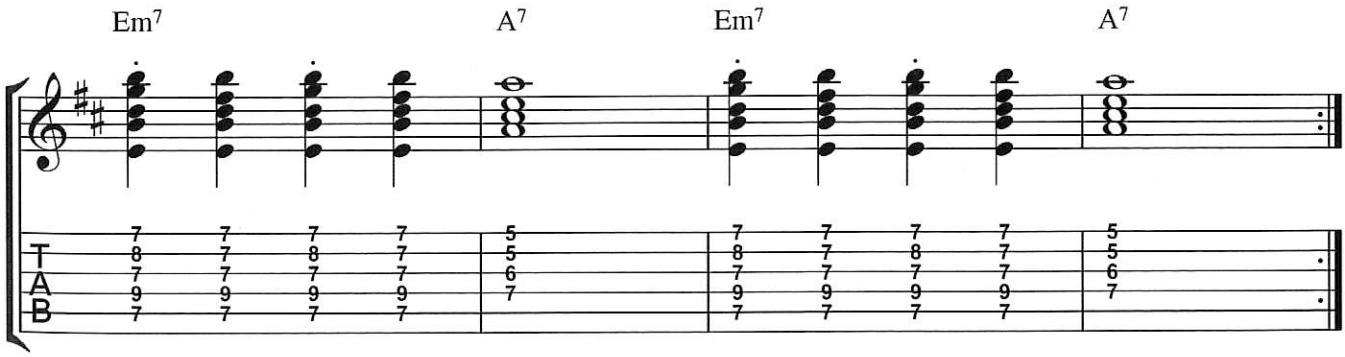
Intro/Chorus

Nile plays a very straight rhythm during the Chorus. Note how he changes the chord voicing on beats one and two of the first and third bars: in the first chord the top note is G (the minor third), in the second it is a B (the fifth), which then drops nicely down onto the root of the A^7/E chord on beat three. Nile's chord voicings remain the same for the $G^{\Delta 7}$ and $F\sharp m^7$ chords - it is the bass note changing underneath the chords that affects their tonality.



Verse (Guitar 1)

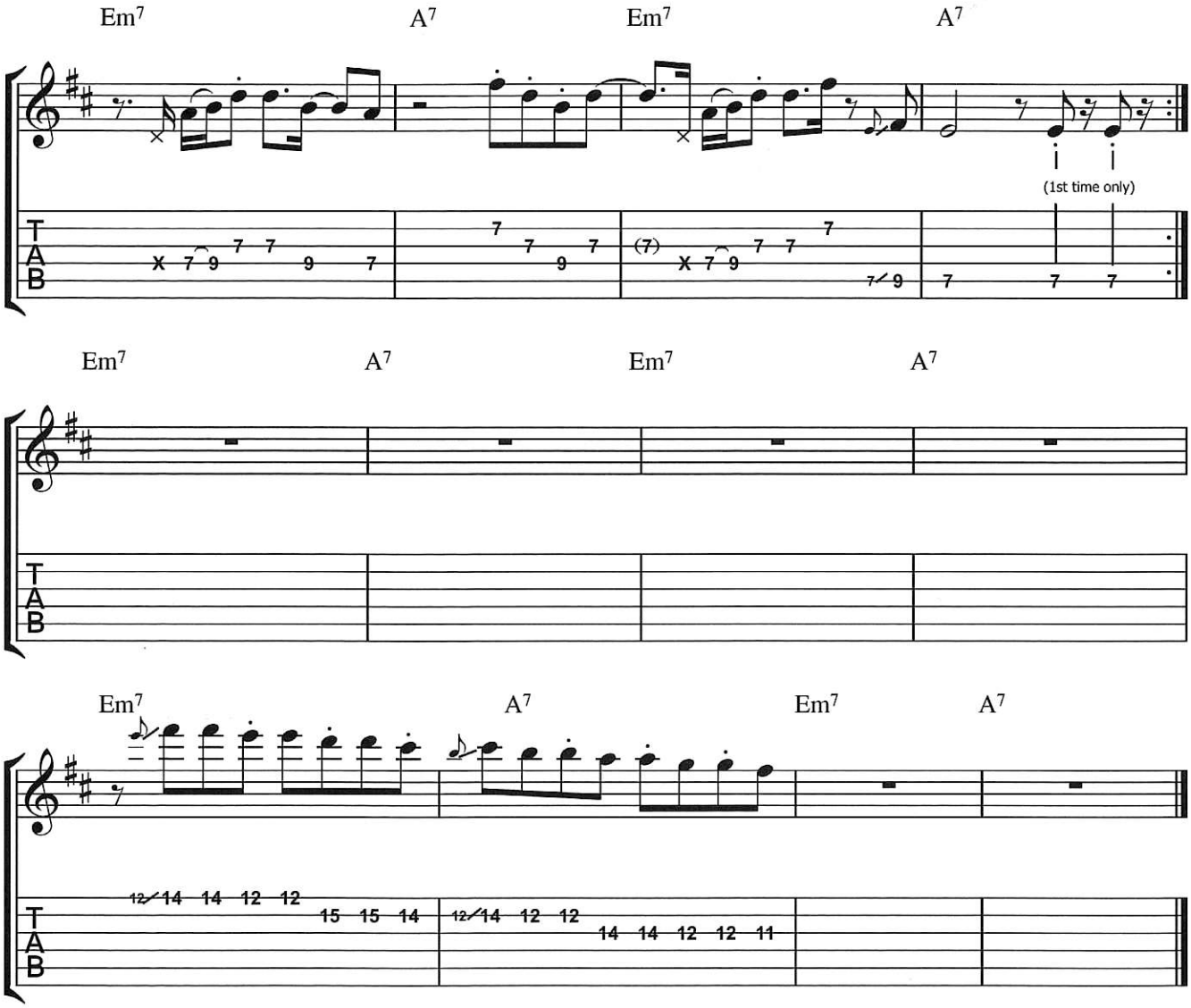
During the Verse, there are two guitar parts. The first, shown below is a simple chord part. note how the minor third (G) in the first chord moves to the ninth (F♯) between beats one and two. This is repeated on beats three and four. This line remains the same throughout the Verse sections.



Chapter 6 - Chic: Strike Up The Band

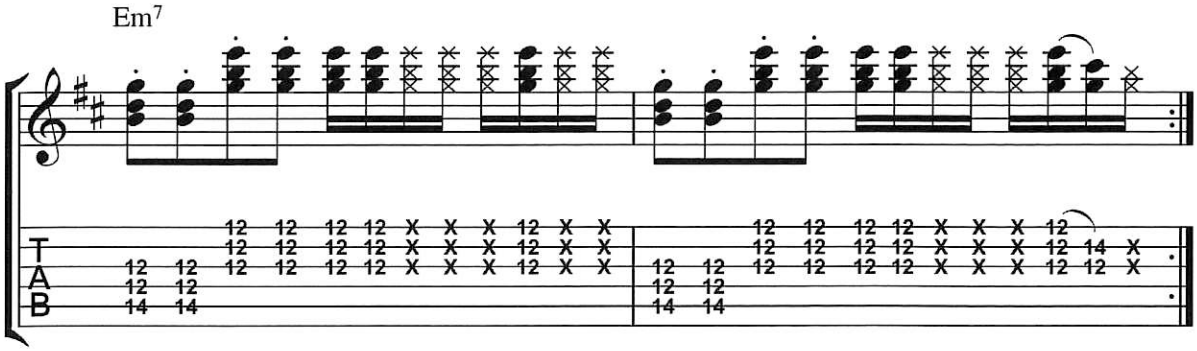
Verse (Guitar 2)

During the Verse Nile plays the melody with the flute. The melody itself is simple, and should present no problems. Nile adds in occasional notes before some of the phrases as you can see and hear in bars one and three. He varies this slightly on repeats, but none of the variations are significant enough to warrant further transcription.



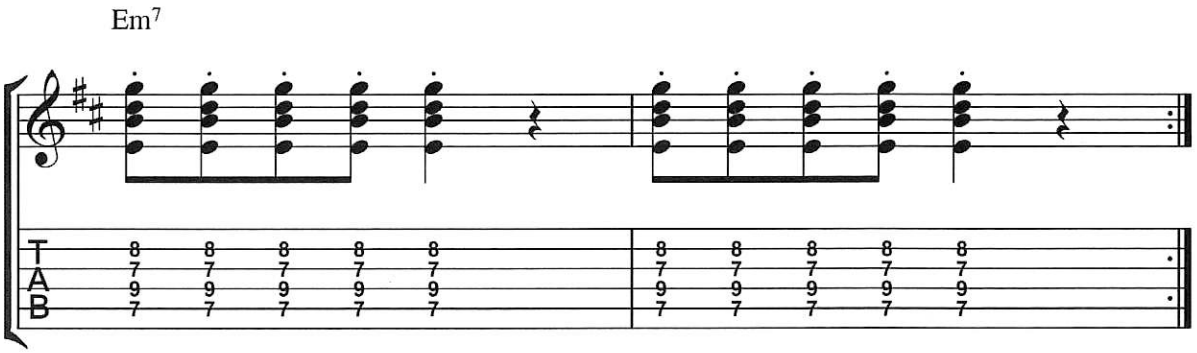
Breakdown (Guitar 1)

During the Breakdown section Nile plays upper register funk rhythms on an Em^7 chord. The transcription below captures the essence of the part, although there are numerous similar rhythmic variations based on the same chord position. The guitar enters the Breakdown after eight bars of bass vamp, at CD time 2.40.



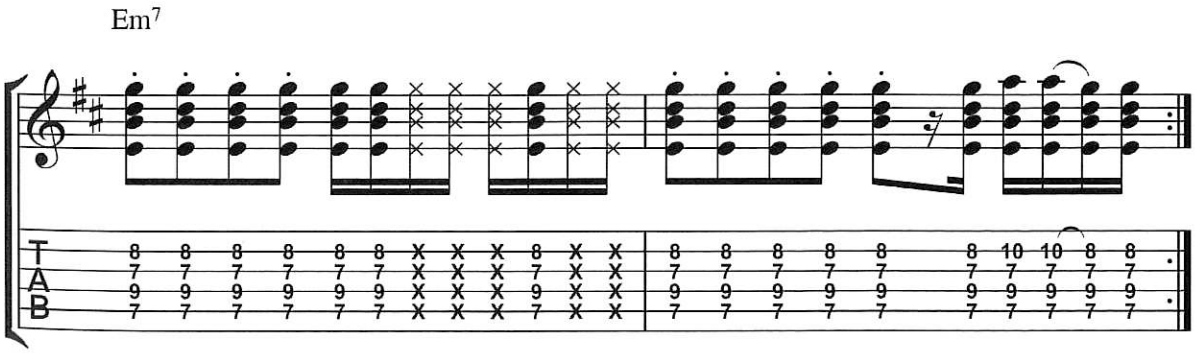
Breakdown (Guitar 2)

Nile overdubbed a second funk guitar line during the Breakdown section, playing a much simpler line, lower on the neck. This line also enters at CD time 2.40.



Breakdown Variation (Guitar 2)

Towards the end of the Breakdown section the second guitar part begins to get progressively funkier. Nile adds in ghost notes and pull-offs, giving the part a sixteenth note feel like the higher guitar line. The combination of the two parts makes for some serious funk. The transcription below is just one of the variations that Nile plays - there are many other rhythmic variations based around the same chord position.



Chapter 7
Le Freak

Artist: Chic
Album: *C'est Chic*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: #7 UK Chart, #1 US Pop Chart, #1 US R&B Chart

'Le Freak' was undoubtedly Chic's biggest hit, and was from the *C'est Chic* album. Although the powers-that-be at Atlantic were reportedly not keen on the song, it nevertheless went straight to Number 1 in the US Charts and R&B Charts, and reached Number 7 in the UK upon its release in late 1978. It sold over six million copies in the US alone, and became the biggest selling record in Atlantic's history at the time. It also became the best-selling song in Canada, and went gold in several countries.

'Le Freak' follows the classic Rodgers/Edwards song writing formula of having a Chorus at the beginning of the song (rather than a Verse). This format is used on many of the songs that Nile and Bernard recorded with Chic and Sister Sledge and ensures maximum impact. The track, like everything that the Chic Organisation recorded was done very quickly, and recorded in under two hours. The song is also notable for the unusual sounding handclaps in the Intro. These were created by producer Bob Clearmountain, who was known for his experimental studio techniques (particularly when working with Chic). The handclaps were created by turning the tape upside down and recording them back through an echo chamber. When the tape was turned back over and played back, the echo came before the clap.

Song Lyrics

'Le Freak' was originally written in response to the song-writing duo being refused entry to the famous disco nightclub Studio 54. They had been invited to the club on New Years Eve 1977 to meet with Grace Jones and discuss the possibility of working with her on her next album. Unfortunately, their names were not left at the door, and despite their protests that they were the two key members of Chic, they were refused entry. Angry, they returned to Nile's house, and began jamming around a simple vocal refrain: 'Ahhhhh.... Fuck Off!' They soon realised that what they were working on was a potential hit record: 'Fuck Off' became 'Freak Off', then 'Freak Out', a reference to a popular dance at the time known as The Freak. Studio 54 is also referenced in the lyrics. As a consequence of the story behind the song, Rodgers and Edwards never worked with Grace Jones together, although Nile produced her 1986 album *Comeback*.

Ahhhhh freak out!
Le freak, c'est Chic
Freak out! (x4)

Have you heard, about the new dance craze?
Listen to us, I'm sure you'll be amazed
Big fun, to be had by everyone
It's up to you, it surely can be done
Young and old are doin' it, I'm told
Just one try, and you too will be sold
It's called 'Le Freak', they're doin' it night and day
Allow us, we'll show you the way

Ahhhhh freak out!
Le freak, c'est Chic
Freak out! (x4)

All that pressure, got you down
Has your head, spinning all around
Feel the rhythm, chant the rhyme
Come on along and have a real good time
Like the days of stomping at the Savoy
Now we're free, oh what a joy
Just come on down to 54
Find your spot, out on the floor

Ahhhhh freak out!
Le freak, c'est Chic
Freak out! (x4)
Now freak!

I said freak
Now freak!

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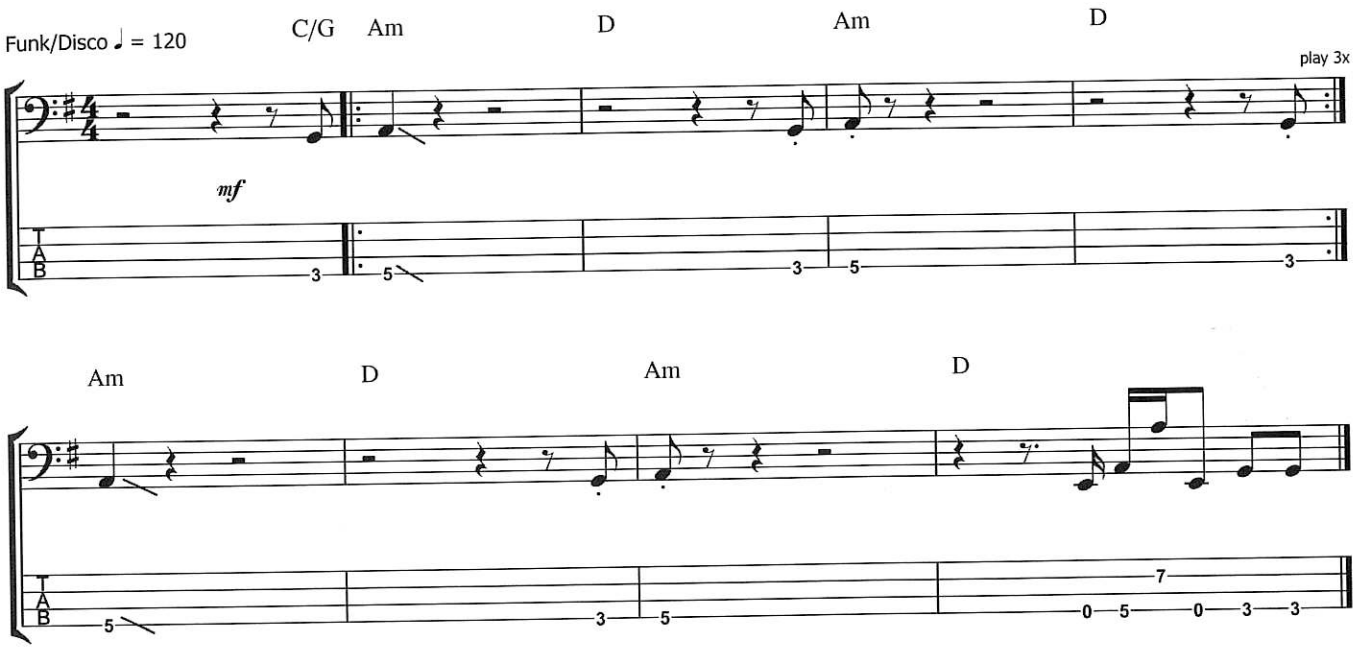
Bass Guitar

'Le Freak' is another Bernard Edwards tour-de-force, and features all of his trademark groove elements: bubbling fingerstyle funk, sixteenth note octave figures, use of space, and of course the ability to create a bass part that is memorable in its own right – nowhere is this more evident than on the instrumental section of the song, with its catchy, repeating bass figure.

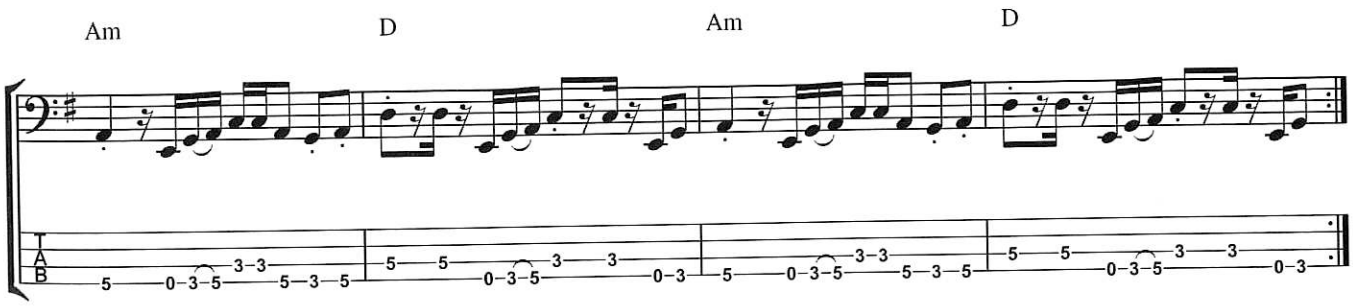
Intro/Chorus

Like most Chic songs, 'Le Freak' begins with a Chorus. Bernard keeps his part ultra simple here, allowing maximum space for the instantly recognisable 'Ahhhhh.... Le Freak!' vocal figure. Notice how he alternates between staccato notes (at the beginning of each phrase) and legato notes with glissandos (slides). The Intro/Chorus ends with a classic Bernard Edwards fill: an octave jump that leads neatly to the busier Verse bassline. These octave jumps are difficult to perform with the rhythmic accuracy that Bernard had – practice them slowly. You can hear similar uses of this figure in 'We Are Family' and 'Thinking Of You'.



Verse

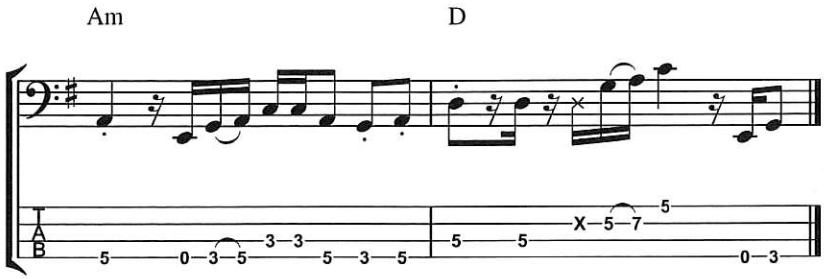
For the Verse Bernard opts for a busier line that fits perfectly around Nile Rodgers' funky guitar groove. As is common for Bernard, many of the notes are played staccato, even if they are not marked as such. This is one of the keys to mastering Bernard's feel: make sure rests are rests, and allow the line to breathe. It's the start-stop nature of the line (and others like it) that make it so funky. Bernard predominantly uses chord tones in the construction of this line – every note in the Am bars is a chord tone. He keeps the line a little simpler on the second bar of the phrase and just plays the root notes of the C and D chords, approaching them with a simple Jamerson-influenced pentatonic approach pattern.



Chapter 7 - Chic: Le Freak

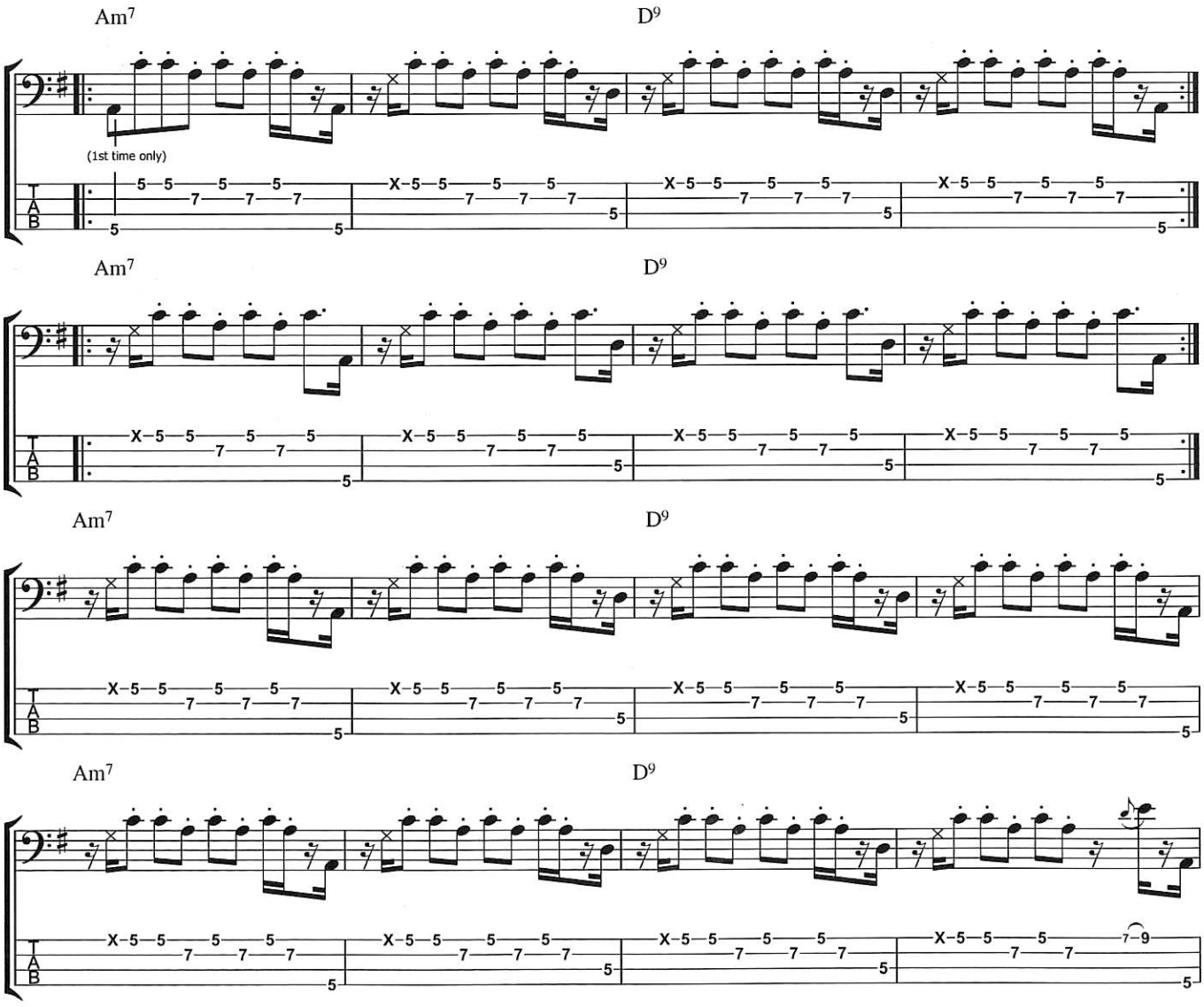
Bass Variation 1

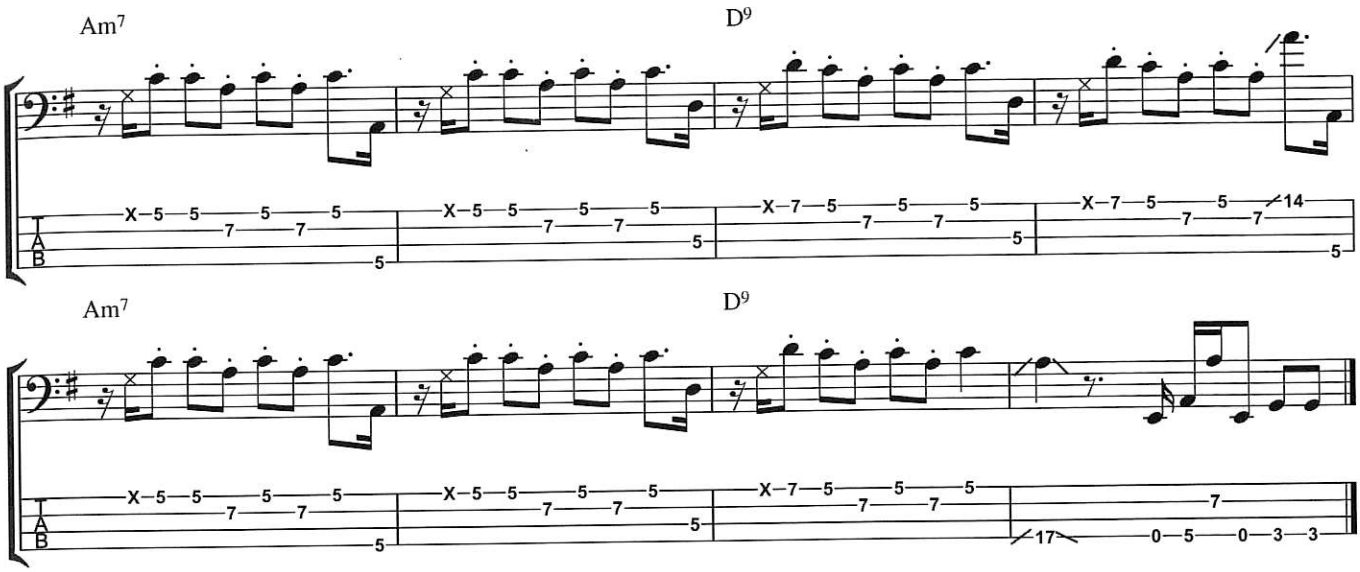
This variation occurs at CD time 1.52 of the original, full length version of this song. In the second half of the bar Bernard plays the C and the three note approach to it an octave higher. The fill is simplicity itself, but is a great example of a Bernard Edwards bass fill: different enough to stand out, but simple, and used sparingly. This fill also occurs in the second Verse (which is identical to the second) at CD time 4.02.



Instrumental Section

The instrumental section of 'Le Freak' is one of the finest Bernard Edwards moments on record. His funky two-bar bass ostinato is once again simple, but so effective. His use of rests, staccato notes and ghost notes is second to none, as is the way he varies the line after the first two repeats, allowing the C at the end of each bar to ring longer. Once again there is minimal use of fills and variation, but those that he does play are tasteful – check out the grace note hammer-on in bar 12, the slide up to the A at the fourteenth fret of the G string in bar 16 and of course his fill in the final bar which is identical to the fill at the beginning of the song, but preceded with a glissando.



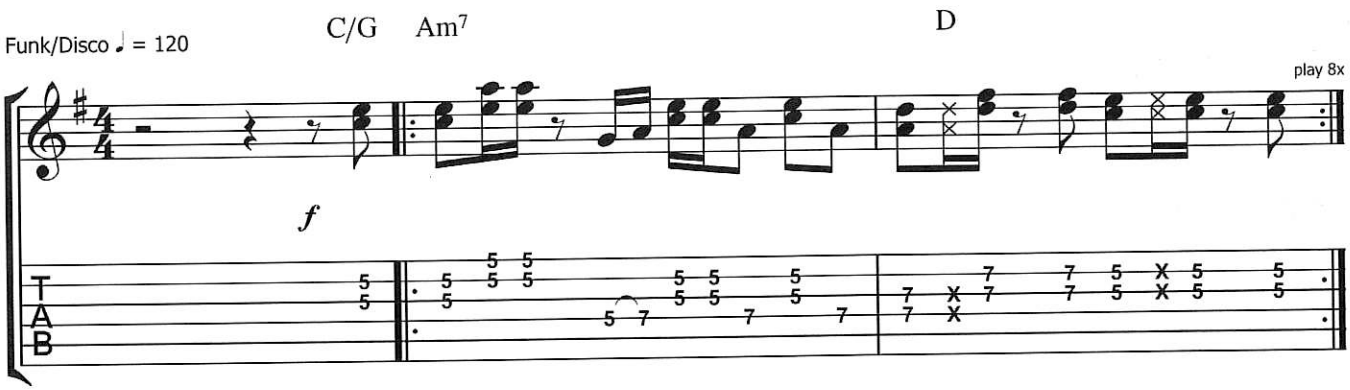


Guitar

'Le Freak' features one of Nile Rodgers' most recognisable and copied guitar parts.

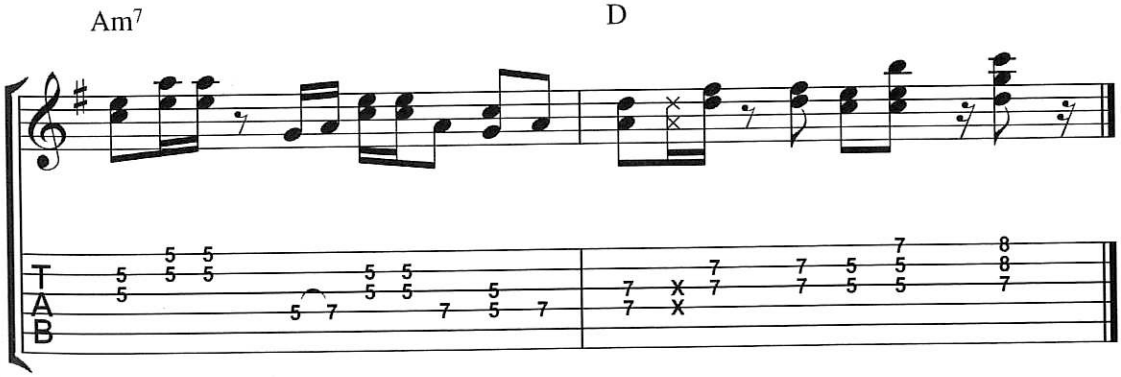
Intro/Verse/Chorus

The two bar rhythm guitar riff which is introduced in the Intro to the song is used extensively throughout the rest of the tune. Nile plays minimal chord voicings interspersed with rests and ghost notes in a style that is a perfect compliment to Bernard Edwards' bass groove. Once you have this riff nailed, you'll have most of the song under your belt.



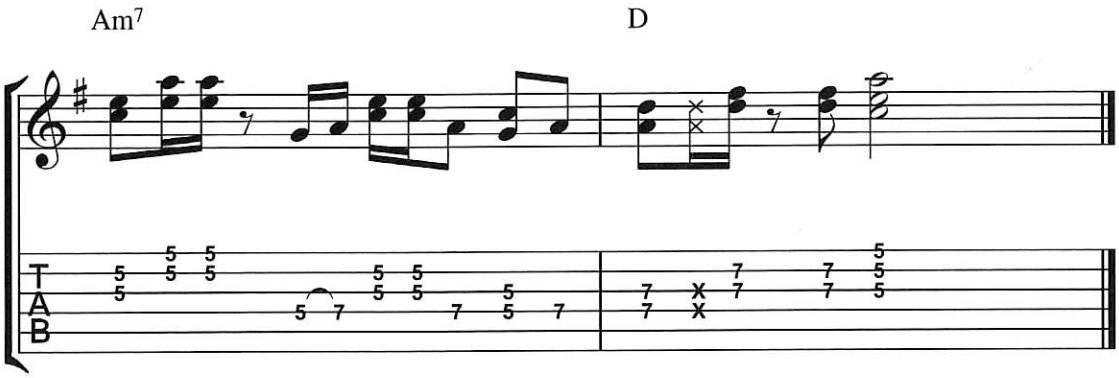
Guitar Variation 1

This variation occurs at CD time 0.14 and again at 0.55 and is a minimal variation on the second bar of the groove. Here, Nile plays two three-note chordal figures, the first of which adds a major seventh (B) to the implied C chord, the second of which adds a ninth (D).



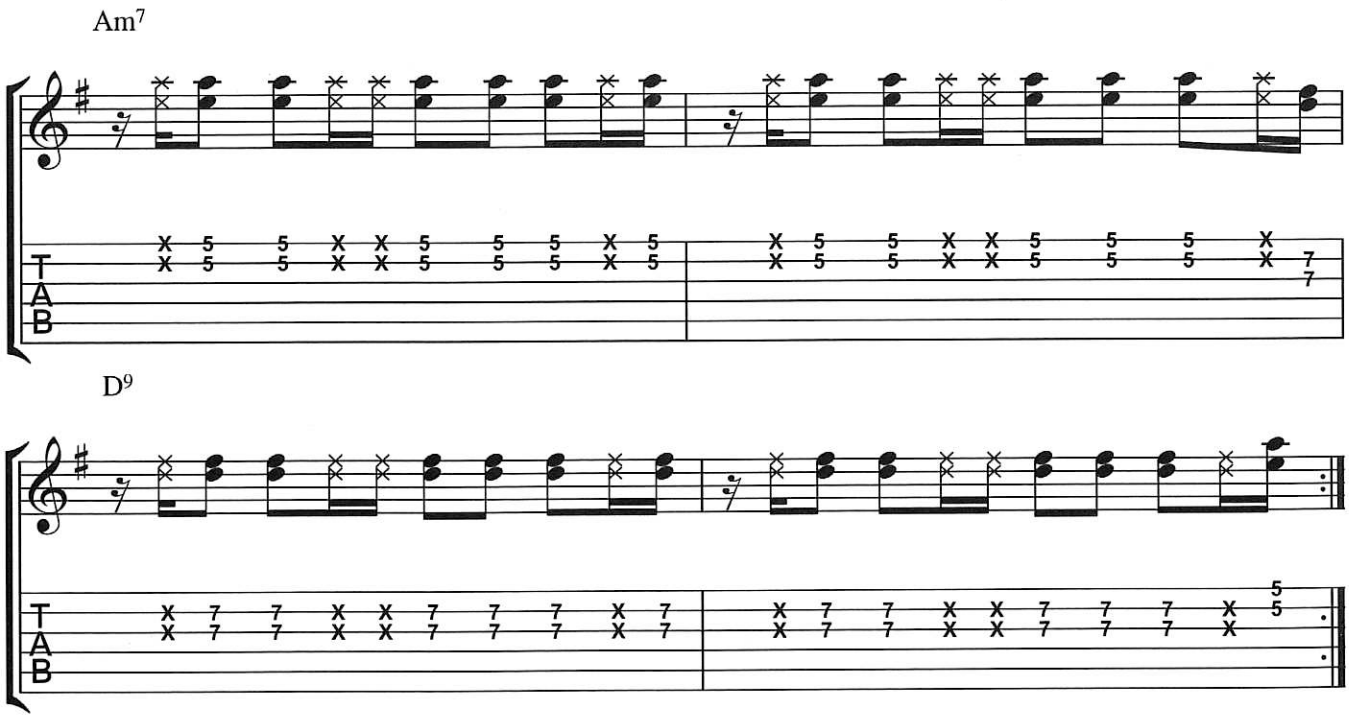
Guitar Variation 2

This variation comes at the end of the second Chorus, at CD time 2.40. Here, Nile adds a top A to the implied C chord (effectively making it an Am^7 chord), and lets it hang for two beats – this leads nicely into the Instrumental Section.



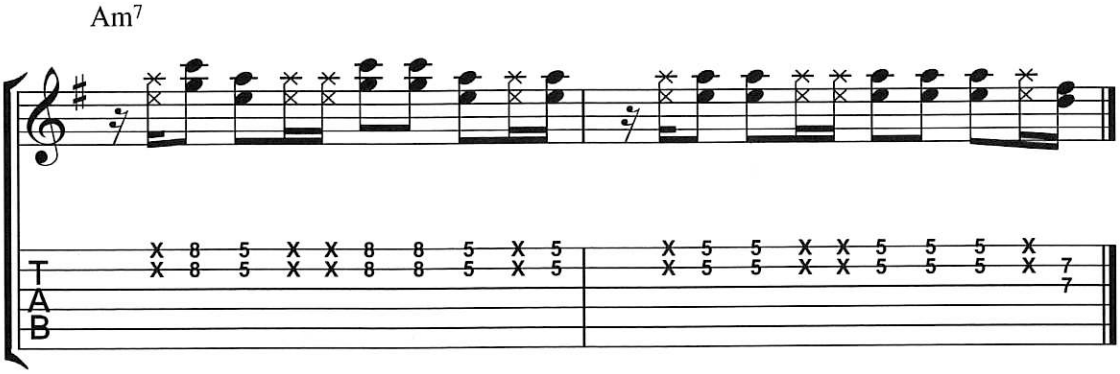
Instrumental Section

Nile keeps his rhythm part very simple for the Instrumental Section, which is really a showcase for bassist Bernard Edwards. He plays minimal voicings again, keeping his part light and unobtrusive.



Guitar Variation 3

This variation occurs during the Instrumental Section. Nile moves his two-note figure up to the eighth fret, playing a C and a G – the third and seventh of the Am^7 chord. You can hear this at CD time 3.01.



Chapter 8
Chic Cheer

Artist: Chic
Album: *C'est Chic*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: Non single

'Chic Cheer' was the third song on Chic's second album, C'est Chic. Mostly instrumental, 'Chic Cheer' was a popular live song thanks to its anthemic nature, and obvious crowd participation opportunity. There are great versions of this tune on the live CD Live At The Budokan - sadly Bernard's final performance with the band - and the more recent Nile Rodgers and Chic Live at Montreaux, with bassist Jerry Barnes (like Bernard, a resident of North Carolina) laying down the low end in fine style.

Song Lyrics

There are very few lyrics to this song, which for the most part is an instrumental. The middle section of the tune provides an opportunity for the crowd to spell out the band's name with their arms in the style of the Village People song 'YMCA'.

Chic, Chic - Chic
Chic, Chic - Chic (x4)
Everybody strut

Chic, Chic - Chic
Chic, Chic - Chic (x4)
Everybody strut
Come on everybody

Give me a C – C
Give me an H – H
Give me an I – I
Give me a C – C

If you're fans of Chic
Consider yourself unique
Just one favour we ask
We hope it's not too hard a task
If you don't mind, would you please
Get up off of your seat and repeat

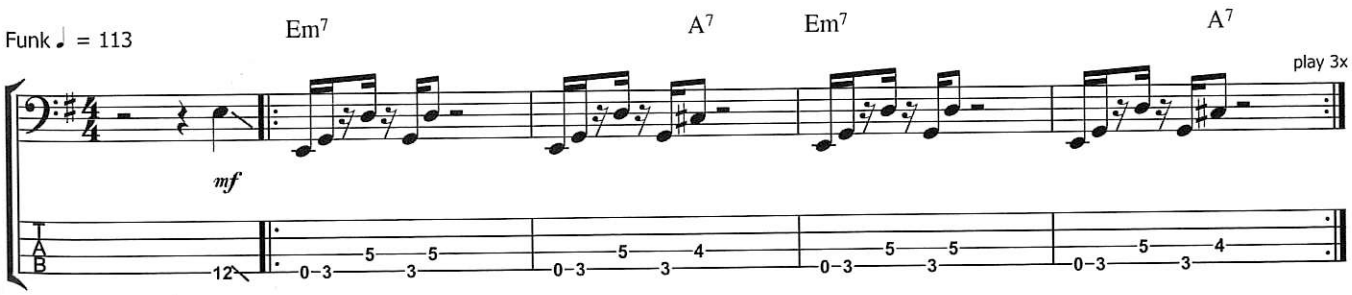
Chic, Chic - Chic
Chic, Chic - Chic (x8)

Bass Guitar

'Chic Cheer' features some fantastic playing from Bernard Edwards. The song consists of two different sections: Bernard plays a solid, supportive role on the first section, and throws in some tasty fills and embellishments on the second. Restraint is the key to performing this song!

Section 1

After a sixteen bar guitar/piano intro, the bass enters with a slide into bar 17. Bernard doubles the guitar and piano riff without embellishment until the final bar of the section where he ascends the neck to play a tasty fill that implies an E^7 chord.



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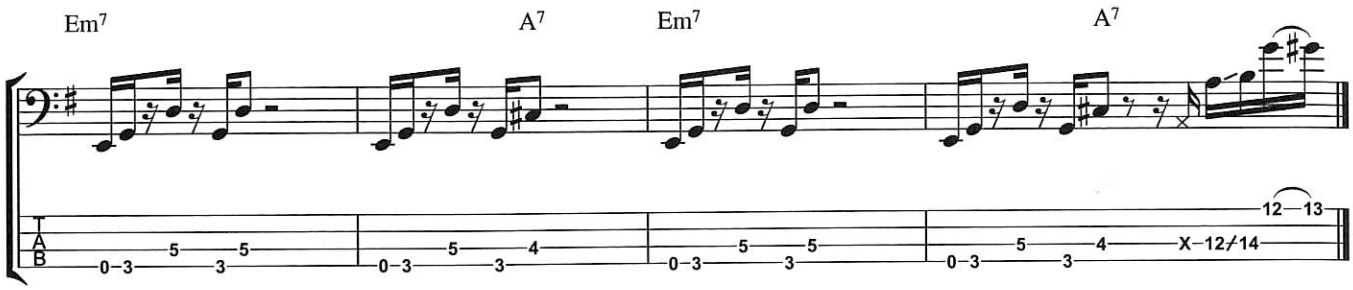
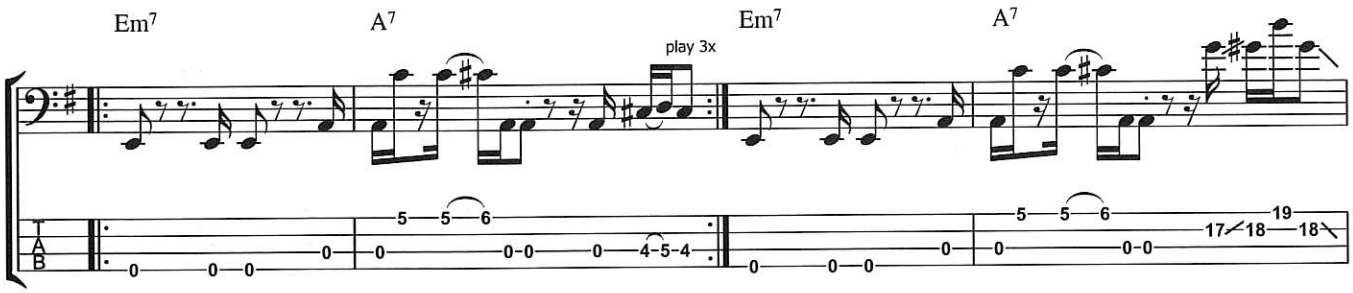
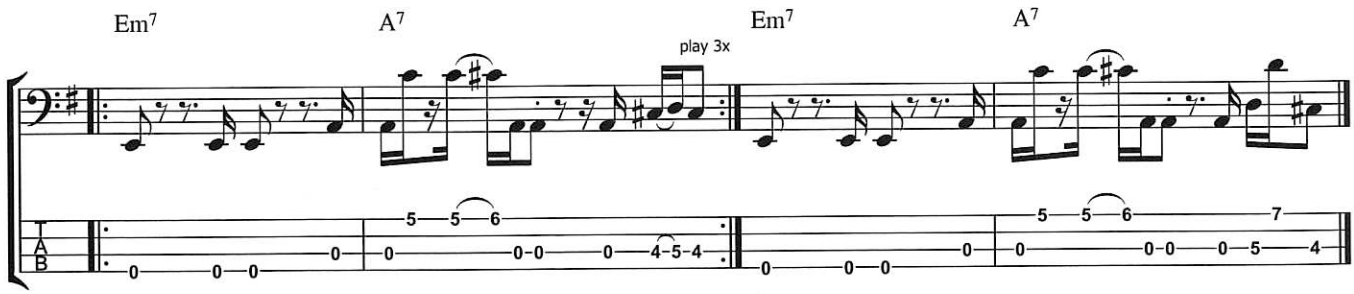


Section 2

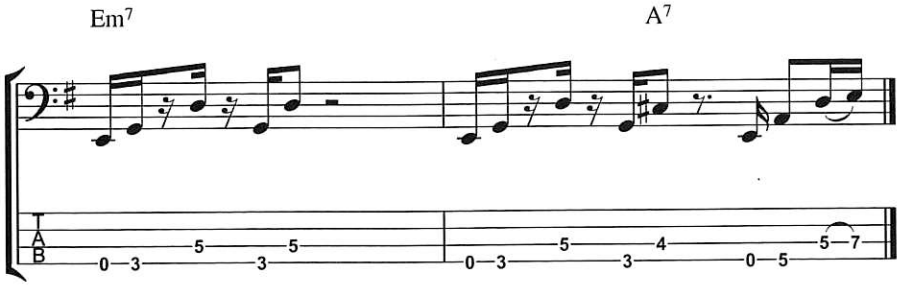
During the next section of the song Bernard plays a repeated two bar vamp. He keeps his part simple in the first bar using sixteenth note anticipation notes before beats one and three. This is a contrast to Tony Thompson's kick drum part which at this point is playing four on the floor. In the second bar of the vamp he plays a tenth, (open A string and the third of the chord, C♯ an octave higher) to imply the A major chord. This concept of playing simple for the first bar, then embellishing in the second works work in Chic's music and happens often. At the end of the fourth repeat of the vamp he once again ascends the neck for an E^7-based fill – he picks the third and ♭7 of the chord here, playing a popular tritone interval. His use of the E^7 chord is interesting since the backing chord is still A. The final bar of this section features one of Bernard's classic 'octave jumps' (as heard extensively in 'We Are Family').





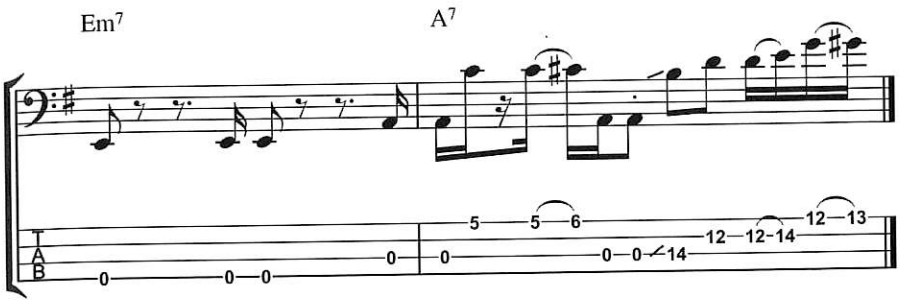
Bass Variation 1

This variation occurs at CD time 2.23 and serves as a link between the repeat of the opening theme of the piece, and the next 'Everybody Strut' section.



Bass Variation 2

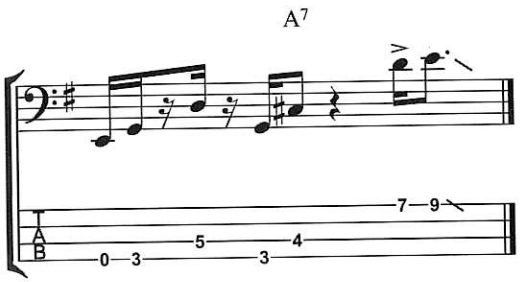
This great fill once again implies an E^7 chord and can be heard at CD time 2.49.



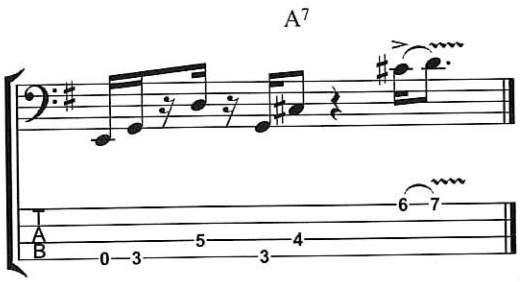
The following fills come during the crowd participation section of this song (Give me a C... etc).

Bass Variations 3 & 4

This variation can be heard at CD time 3.17. Here Bernard plays a hammer-on from D to E, the fifth of the A chord.

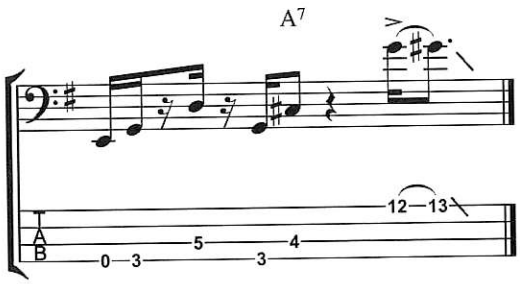


This fill can be heard at CD time 3.26. Bernard plays a hammer-on from C♯, the third of the chord to a D.

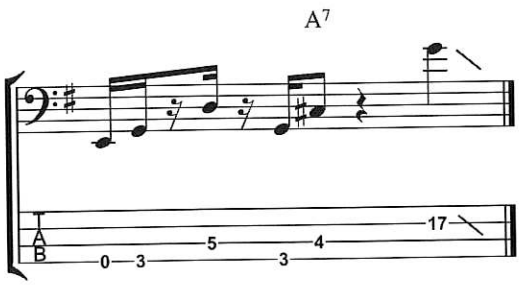


Bass Variations 5 & 6

This fill once again implies an E^7 chord and can be heard at CD time 3.34.

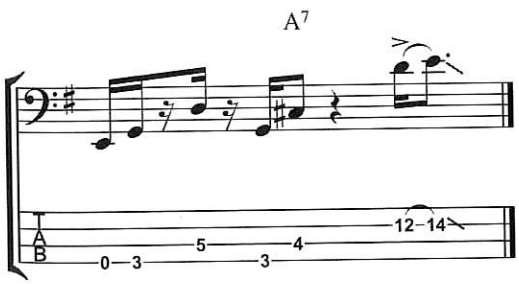


This one occurs at CD time 3.51 and is a simple slide from G down the neck.



Bass Variation 7

This fill is the same as Variation 3 but is clearly played on the D string rather than the G. You can hear this fill at CD time 4.25, just as the track is fading out.



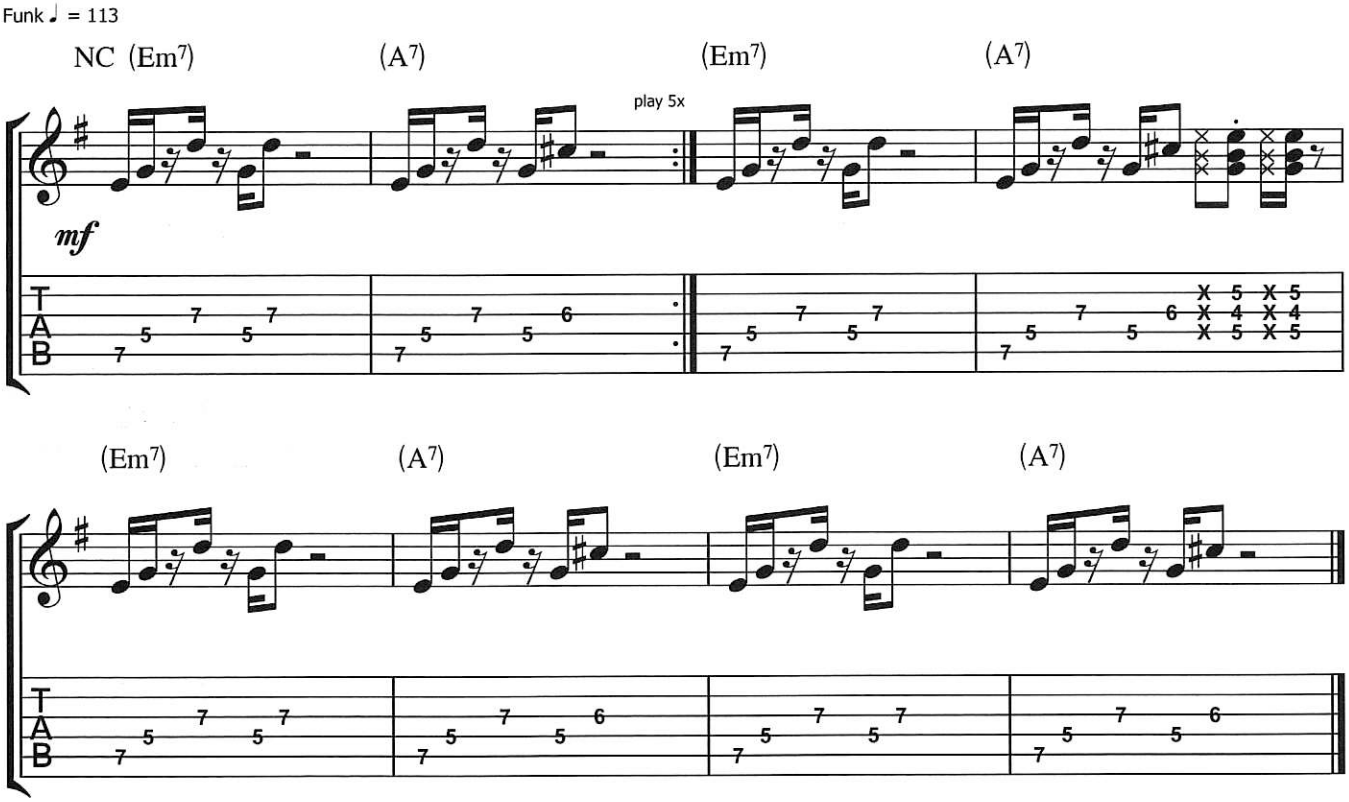
Chapter 8 - Chic: Chic Cheer

Guitar

Nile plays a minimal, but funky role during this song. His guitar part for section 1 is a unison line with the bass and piano. Nile adds a few unintrusive chordal flourishes to this section, but others keeps it simple. During section 2 he plays sixteenth note rhythmic figures, subtle enough to provide rhythmic interest but without getting in the way of the vocal.

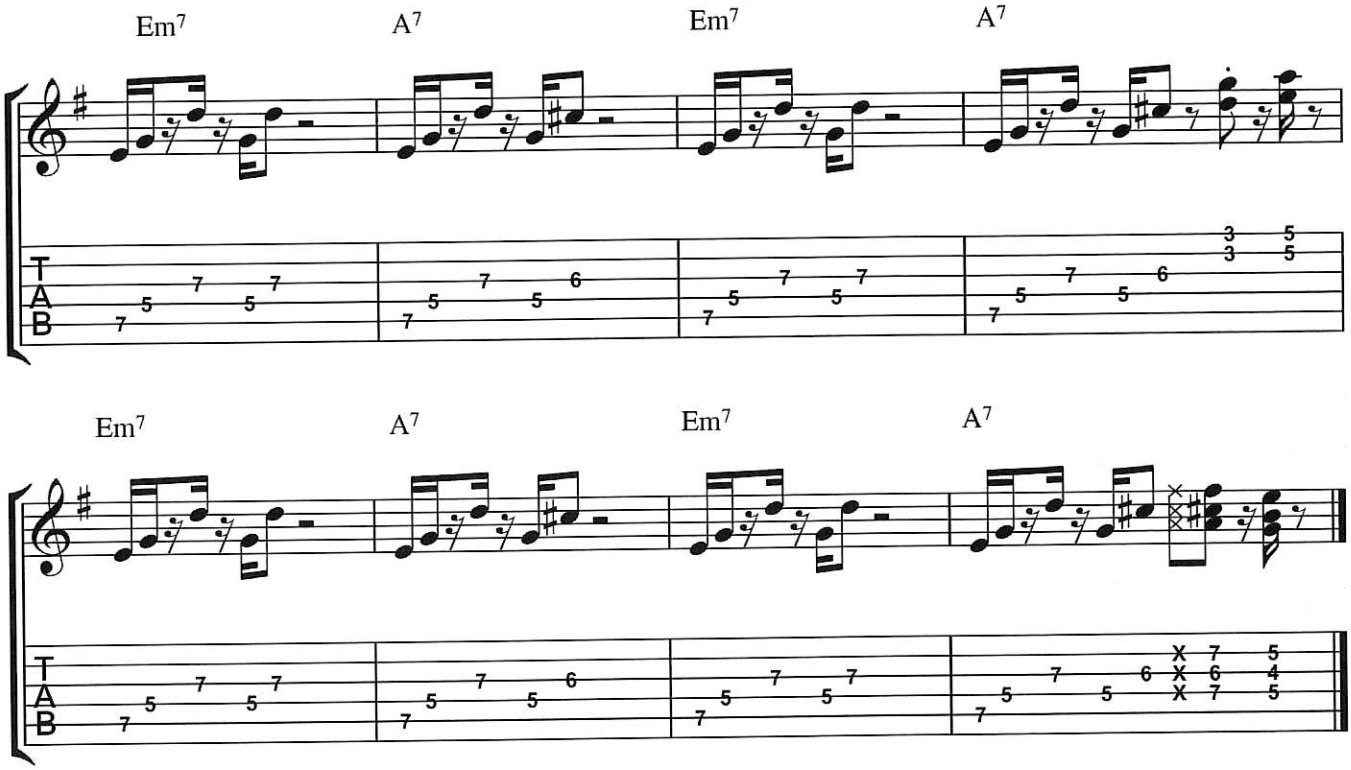
Section 1

The track opens with a two bar melodic motif played in unison with the piano. Nile does not begin embellishing this until the twelfth bar, where he plays an Em chord briefly, although since the underlying harmony implies A^7, his chord could be considered the flat seventh, ninth and fifth of the A^7.



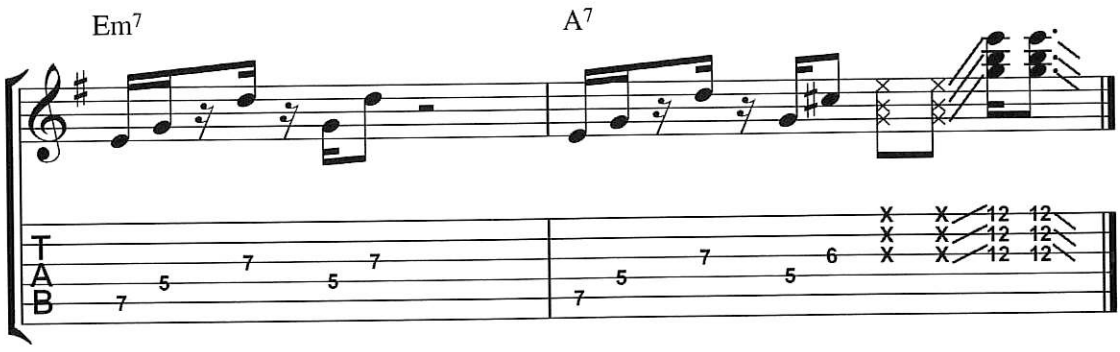
Section 1 (Continued)

Once the bass and drums enter, Nile continues with the melodic figure, adding small chordal embellishments every fourth bar. These are the first two variations heard during this section. It's easy to get carried away with lines like this and add too many fills, but Nile wisely uses them sparingly and the line is all the more effective for it.



Section 1 Variation 1

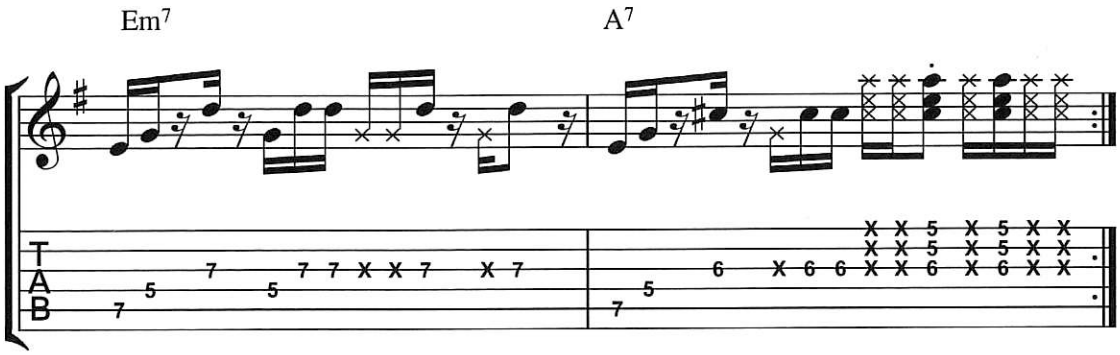
This final lick is a variation on the first section of the tune and comes towards the end of the song, at CD time 4.17. After playing the main melodic figure of the song Nile slides up the neck and plays an upper register chord consisting of the flat seventh (G), the ninth (B) and the fifth (E) of the A^7 chord. This chord could also be thought of as an Em triad.



Chapter 8 - Chic: Chic Cheer

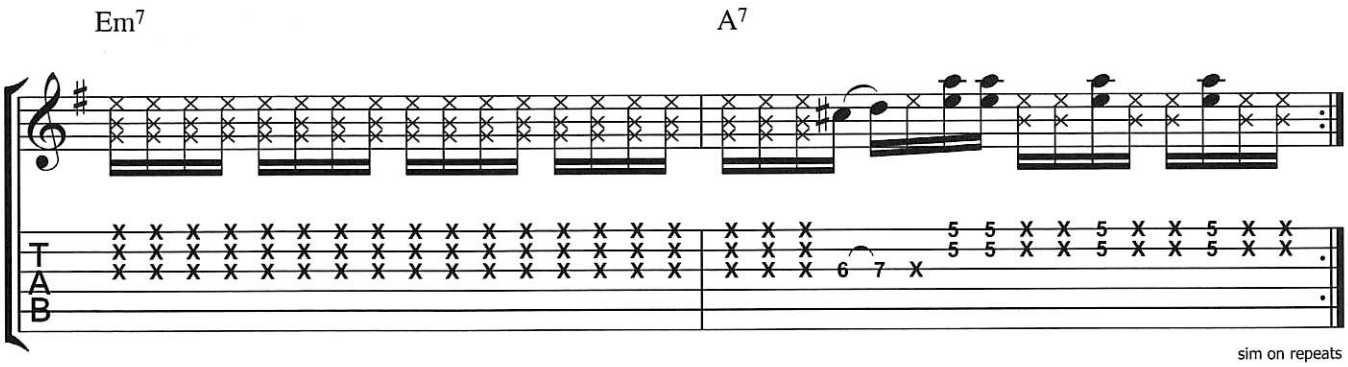
Section 2

For the second section of the song Nile plays a busier part based on the original motif. He adds in extra notes, ghost notes and chordal figures to create a contrast to the previous section. You can hear this line begin at CD time 1.20.



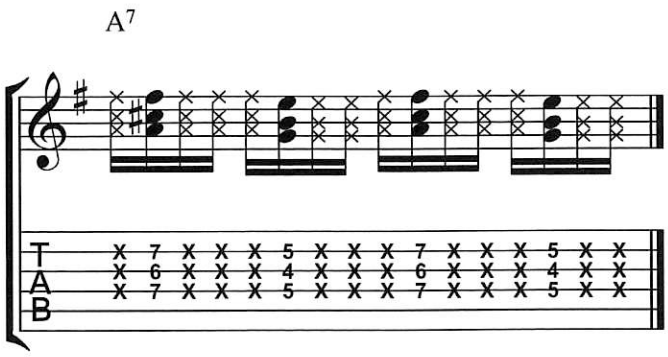
Section 2 (Guitar 2)

The second section of the song has a second overdubbed guitar part, which is mostly just a sixteenth note rhythm using ghost notes. Nile does however add chordal embellishments to the part occasionally, and one of these is transcribed below. You can hear this part at CD time 1.24.



Section 2 Variation 1 (Guitar 2)

The following bar is a variation on the second guitar part and can be heard at CD time 1.43. Here Nile plays a heavily syncopated chordal figure.



Chapter 9
I Want Your Love

Artist: Chic
Album: *C'est Chic*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: #5 US R&B Chart, #7 US Pop Chart, #4 UK Pop Chart

'I Want Your Love' was originally written for the Sister Sledge album *We Are Family*, which was recorded alongisde Chic's second album, *C'est Chic*. Lacking a lead-off single for Sister Sledge, Nile and Bernard decided to give them 'He's The Greatest Dancer', and keep 'I Want Your Love' for their own album. It was the second single to be released off of the *C'est Chic* album, and although not able to match the enormous worldwide success of 'Le Freak', the album's first single, it charted well upon its release in February 1979. The song is notable for its melody, played using a tubular bells sound, and for an instrumental section that is arguably one of disco's finest moments. The use of both strings and horns on this section is exceptional.

Song Lyrics

The lyrics to this song have a definate yearning quality, one that is reflected by the songs minor key, and Nile's insistent repetitive guitar figure.

I want your love, I want your love
I want your love, I want your love

Do you feel like you ever want
To try my love and see how well it fits
Baby can't you see when you look at me
I can't kick this feeling when it hits
All alone in my bed at night
I grab my pillow and squeeze it tight
I think of you and I dream of you
All the time, what am I gonna do?

I want your love, I want your love
I want your love, I want your love
I want your love, I want your love
I want your love, I want your love

Sometime don't you feel
Like you never really had a love that's real?
Well here I am and who's to say
A better love you won't find today
Just one chance and I will show you love
Like no other, two steps above
On your ladder, I'll be a peg

I want your lovin', please don't make me beg

I want your love, I want your love
I want your love, I want your love
I want your love, I want your love
I want your love, I want your love

I want your love, I need your love
I'll share my dreams and make you see
How really bad your love I need
I want your love, I need your love
Just like the birds need sky above
I'll share my dreams and make you see
How really bad your love I need

(Instrumental)

I want your love, I want your love
I want your love, I want your love
I want your love, I want your love
I want your love, I want your love (Repeat to Fade)

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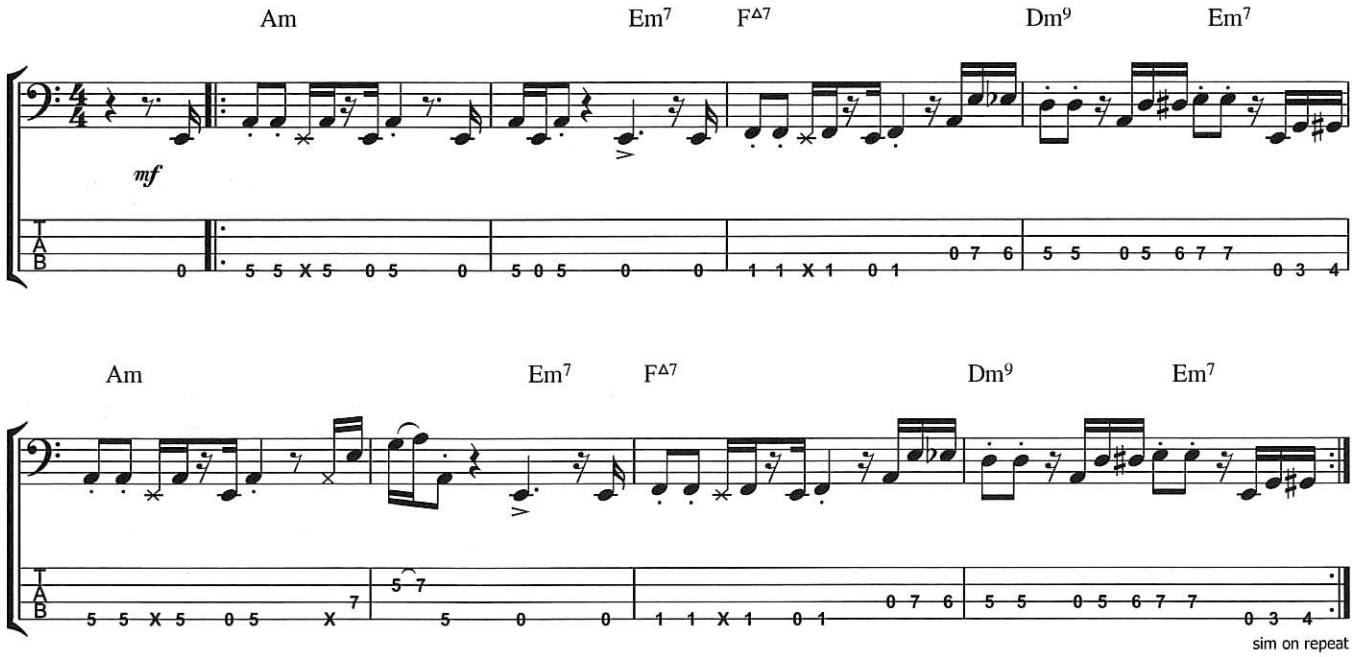
Chapter 9 - Chic: I Want Your Love

Bass Guitar

Bernard plays a great part throughout this track. His line is based around a syncopated groove which he uses for much of the song. His use of chromatic approaches to each of the different chords and his subtle variations and embellishments make this a great bassline to play.

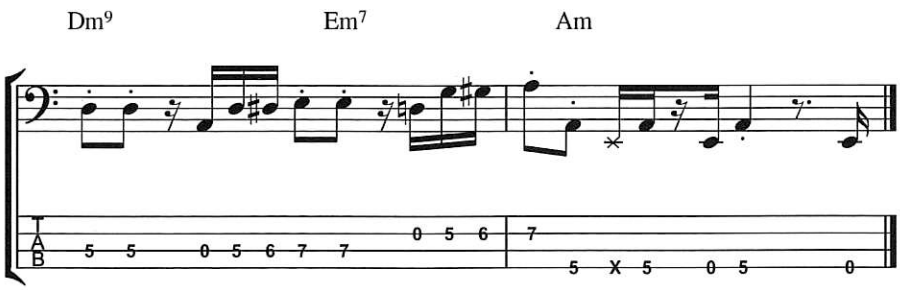
Intro/Chorus/Instrumental Section

This line is the main groove for the song as it is used for the Intro, Choruses, and Instrumental Section with only a few small variations, which are included below. Bernard's trademark use of staccato notes, chromatic approaches and sixteenth note anticipations are all very much in evidence here.



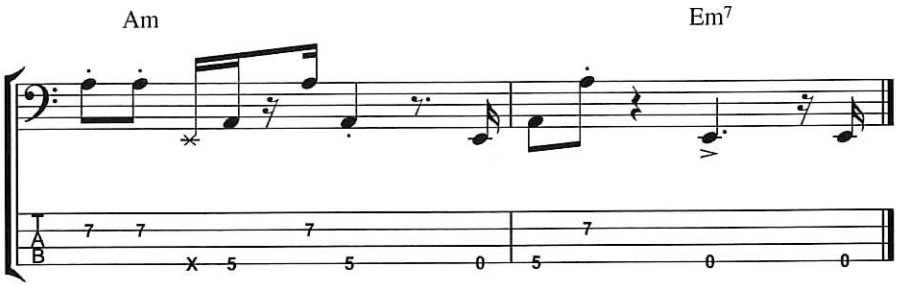
Chorus Variation 1

This variation occurs in the second Chorus, at CD time 2.49. The transcription below features the last bar of the four-bar pattern, and the first of the next four. Here Bernard plays a chromatic approach to the A on the D string for the first time. Once on the A, he drops down to the low A, and continues the line as before.



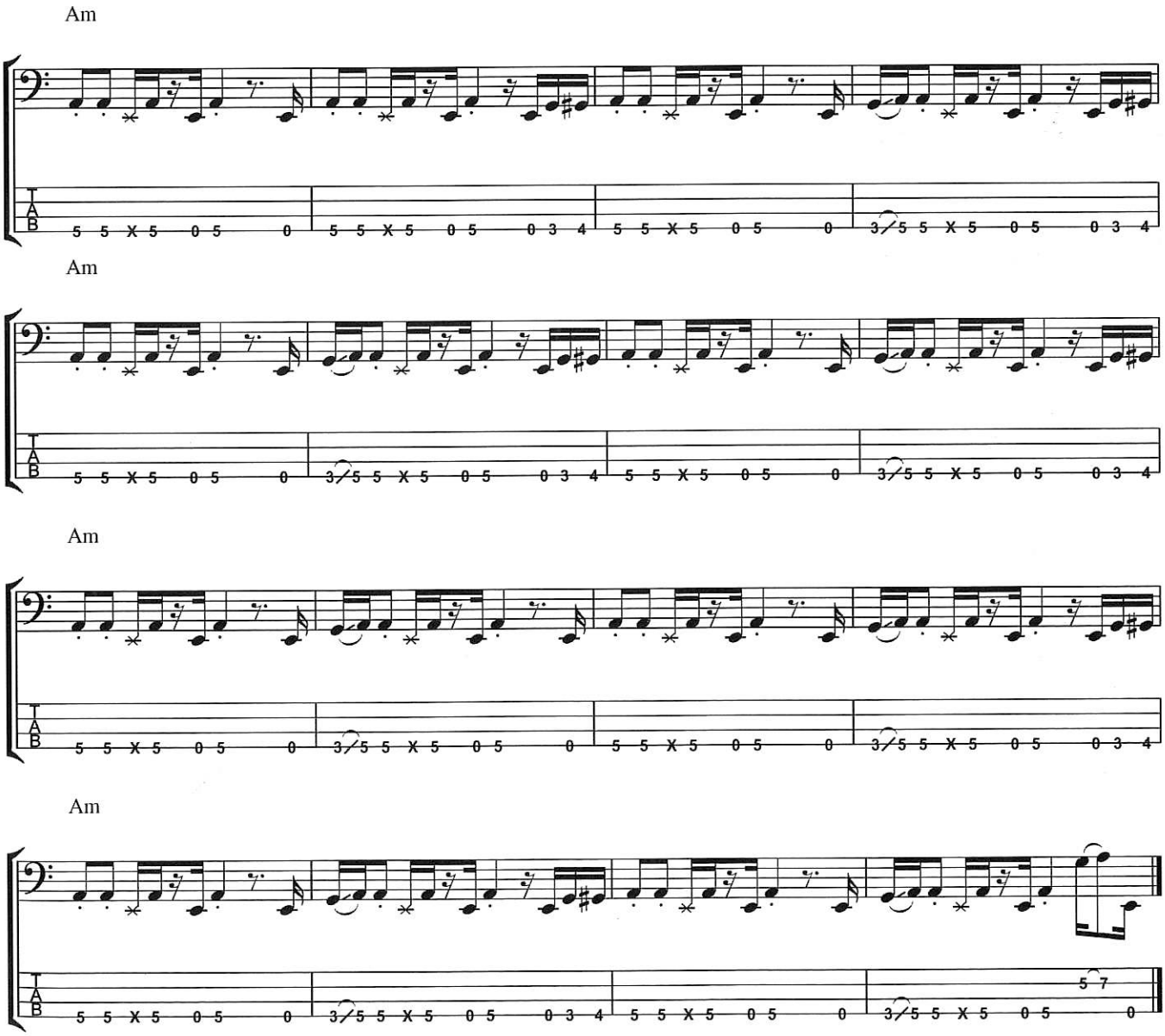
Chorus Variation 2

This variation occurs during the last Chorus, at CD time 6.14. Bernard begins the line on the octave A, before jumping between this note and the A an octave below throughout the groove.



Verse

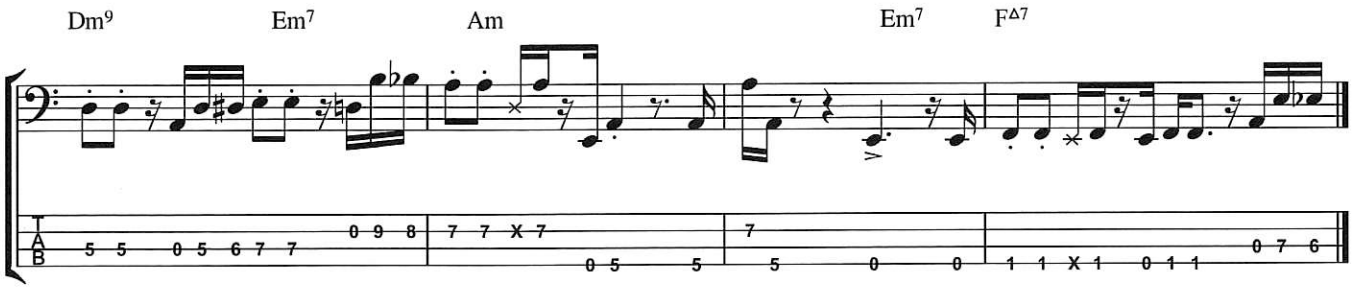
This is a complete transcription of the first Verse. Bernard uses a syncopated funk rhythm figure in every bar. Note his use of chromatic approaches and the lack of variation until the final bar, where he plays a hammer-on from the G to the A (both on the D string) as the song moves to the Chorus. The same line is used for the second Verse.



Chapter 9 - Chic: I Want Your Love

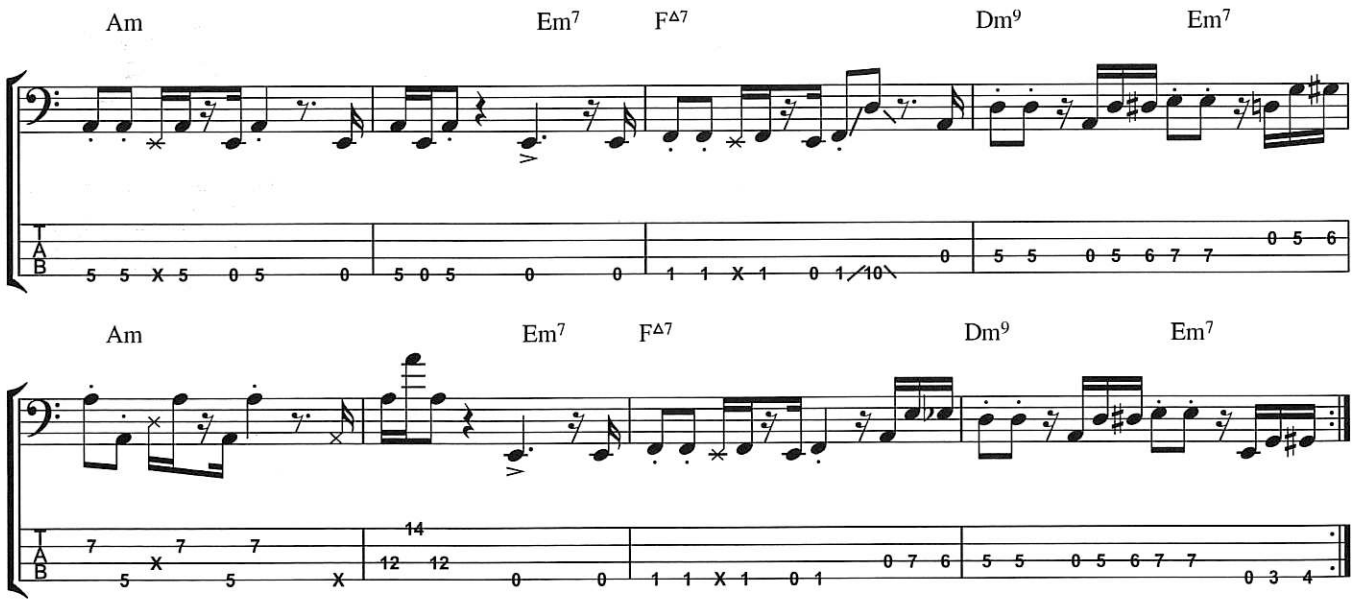
Instrumental Section Variation 1

The extended Instrumental Section, which uses the same bass and guitar grooves as the Chorus, features several notable variations from Bernard. In this example, which occurs at CD time 4.05, Bernard plays a descending chromatic figure from the B on the D string (the fifth of the Em^7 chord), to the A on the D string. He then plays this A in the following bar, and then uses it as an octave jump in the next bar. The transcription below is the last bar of the four bar line, and the first three of the next one.



Instrumental Section Variation 2

This variation occurs at CD time 4.16. Bernard adds a glissando, or slide, in the third bar, and plays a chromatic approach to the A on the D string at the end of the fourth bar. In bar five he favours the A on the D string, and in bar six he ascends the neck for an octave jump fill at the twelfth fret position.

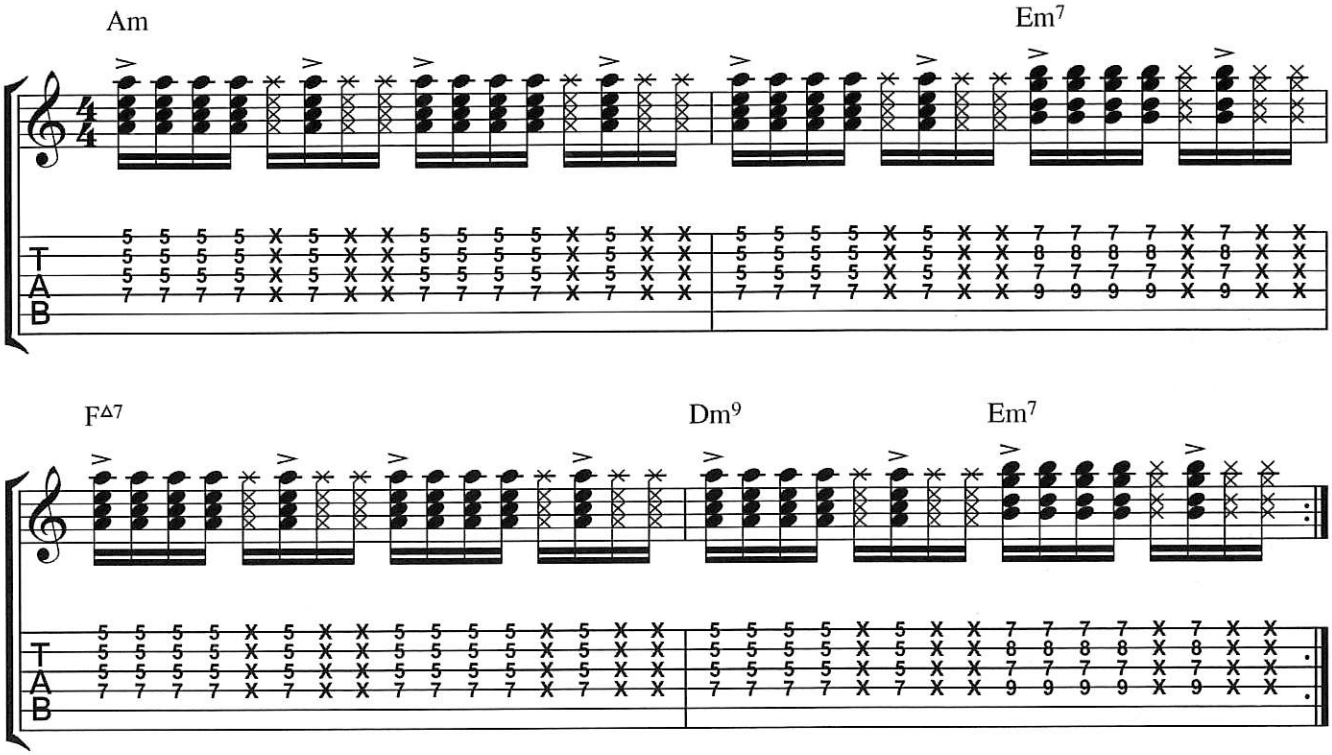


Guitar

Nile plays a repetitive groove throughout this song. The trick is to master his use of the sixteenth note rhythm feel, and learn to place accents on offbeats as he does.

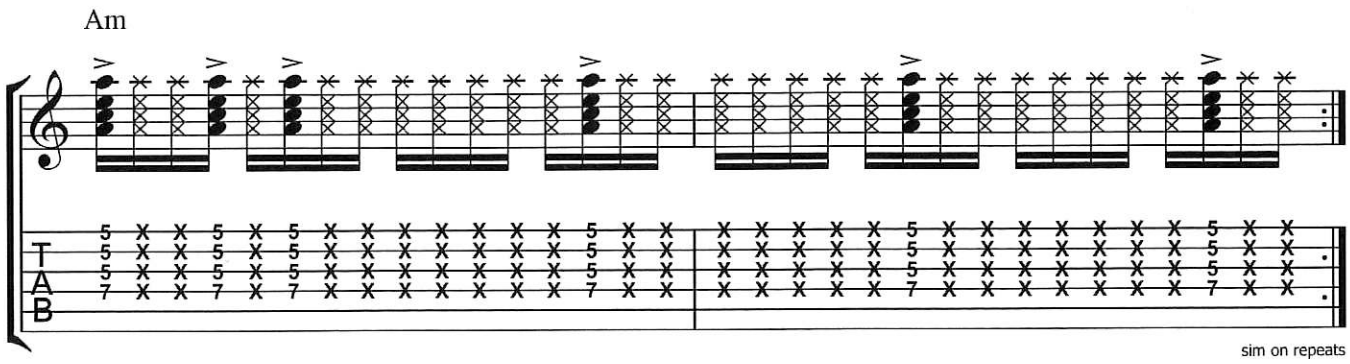
Intro/Chorus/Instrumental Section

This is a transcription of Nile's part for much of the song. As you can see, he alternates between just two chord shapes - the Am and Em^7. The Am works over the $F^{\Delta 7}$ because it contains the same notes aside from the F, which is being provided by the bass, strings and keyboards. The same is true of the Dm^9 chord - the Am chord shape contains A, C, E and A, the fifth, flat seventh, ninth and fifth of Dm^9.



Verse

During the Verse sections Nile plays a continuous sixteenth note rhythm while holding down the Am chord shape. He occasionally allows the chord to sound briefly, usually placing accents on offbeats. This line is varied rhythmically throughout the song, but the chord remains the same.

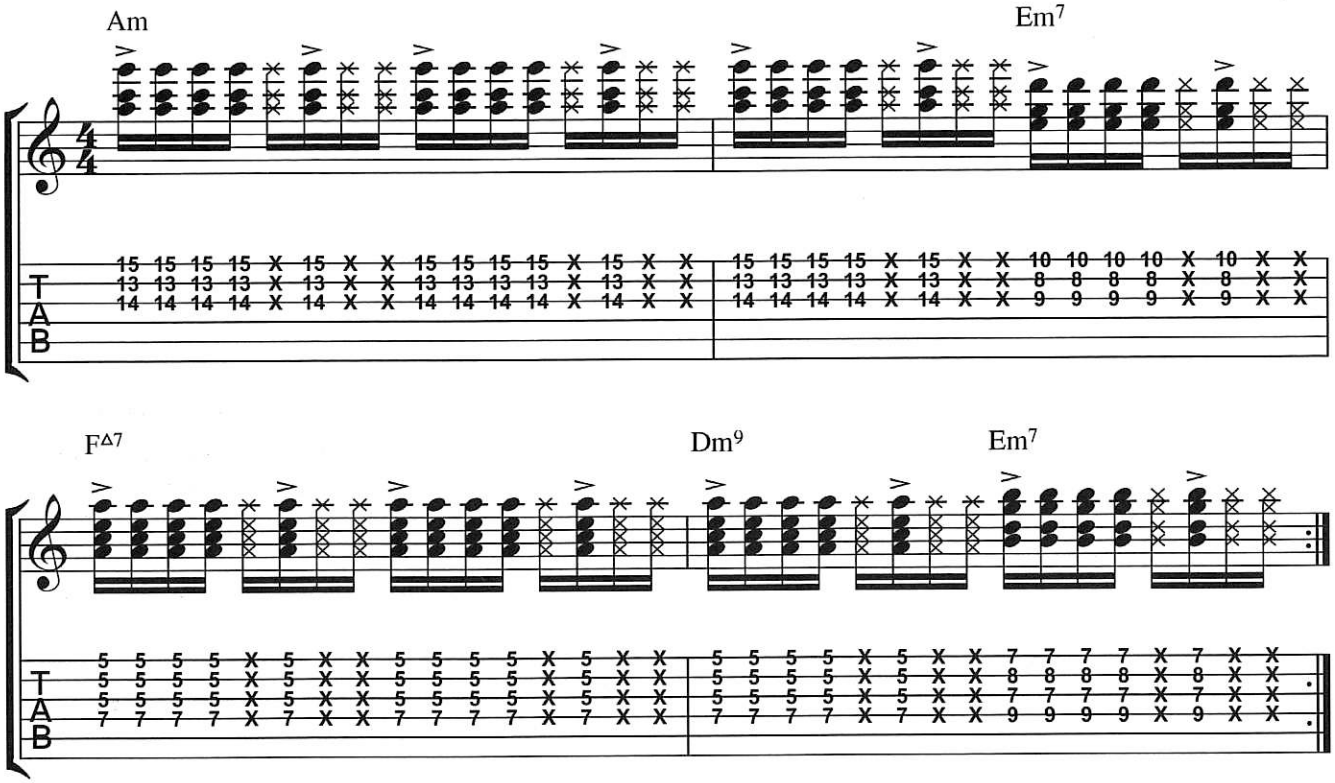


sim on repeats

Chapter 9 - Chic: I Want Your Love

Instrumental Section Variation 1

This variation occurs at CD time 4.15. Nile ascends to the upper register and plays alternate voicings for the Am and Em^7 chords, before heading back down to play the voicings used throughout the rest of the song.



Chapter 10
Happy Man

Artist: Chic
Album: *C'est Chic*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: Non single

This bright, cheerful song is from the *C'est Chic* alum, and features none other than Bernard Edwards on lead vocals. Musically, it's a great performance from both Nile and Bernard: Nile plays his usual syncopated rhythm grooves, and adds a great guitar solo, while Bernard lays down a busy but catchy groove that fits the happy feel of the song perfectly.

Song Lyrics

The lyrics for this song appear to be fitting for Edwards, who also sang the lead vocal. They certainly capture his good spirit, and bright outlook on life.

Happy man, happy man, that's me
Happy man, for you all to see
Happy man, and the world is my home
Happy man, with a style of my own

When you see me, I'm a smiling face
Spreading all my love around the place
All around the world I go travelling
When they see me come, they start to sing

I'm a happy man, happy man, that's me
Happy man, for you all to see
Happy man, and the world is my home
Happy man, with a style of my own

Hanging out all night with the jet set
And I party every little chance I get
Don't you know life can be real nice
And if it's good, I do it twice

I'm a happy man, happy man, that's me
Happy man, for you all to see
Happy man, and the world is my home
Happy man, with a style of my own

Happy man, happy man, that's me
Happy man, for you all to see
Happy man, and the world is my home
Happy man, with a style of my own (x2)
I'm a happy man

Bass Guitar

'Happy Man' is a great example of Bernard's innovative playing in a bright pop context. Although the chord changes are simple, Bernard supplies a funky, bubbling groove that makes use of both standard fingerstyle technique as his unique picking style

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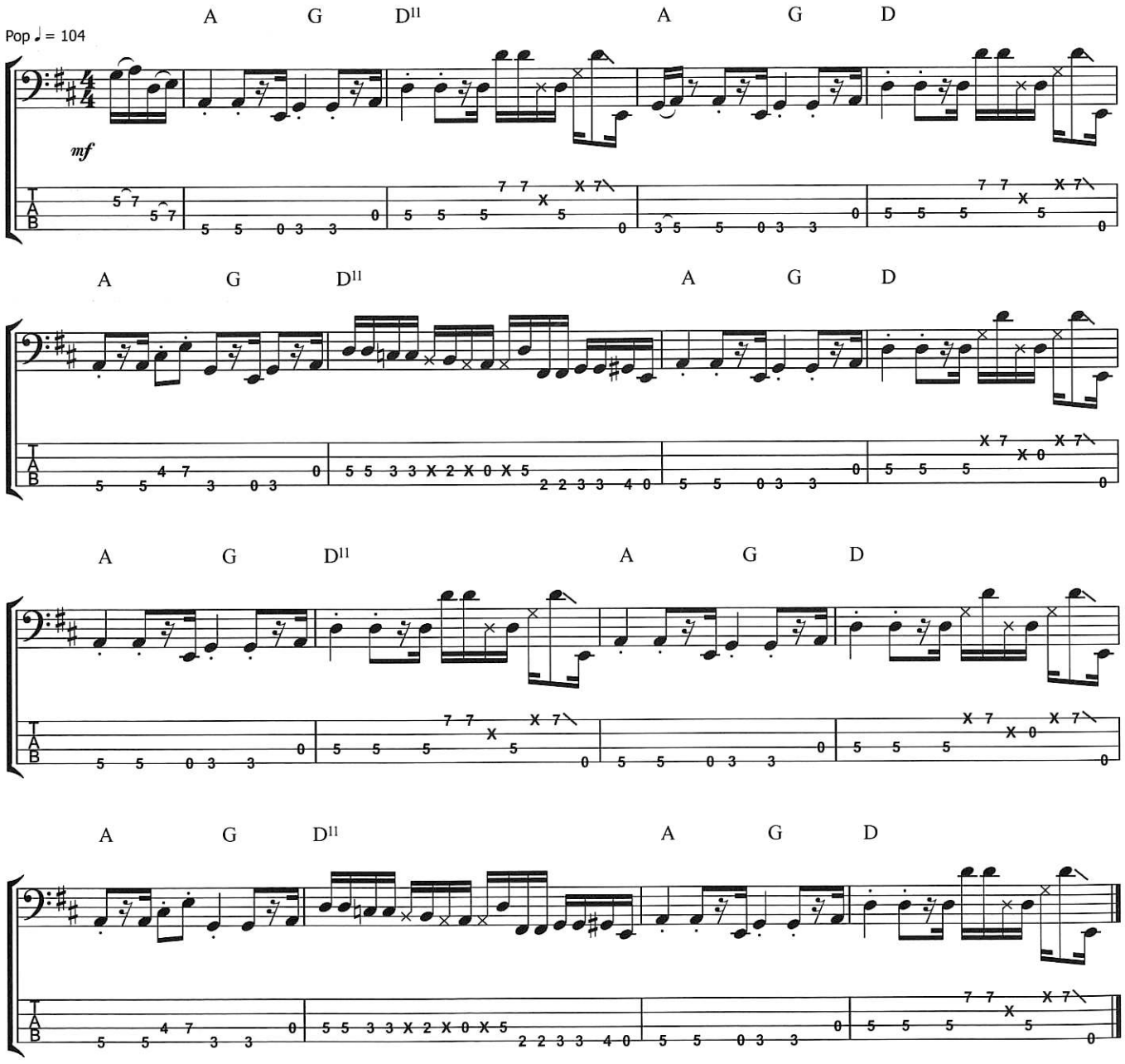
Chapter 10 - Chic: Happy Man

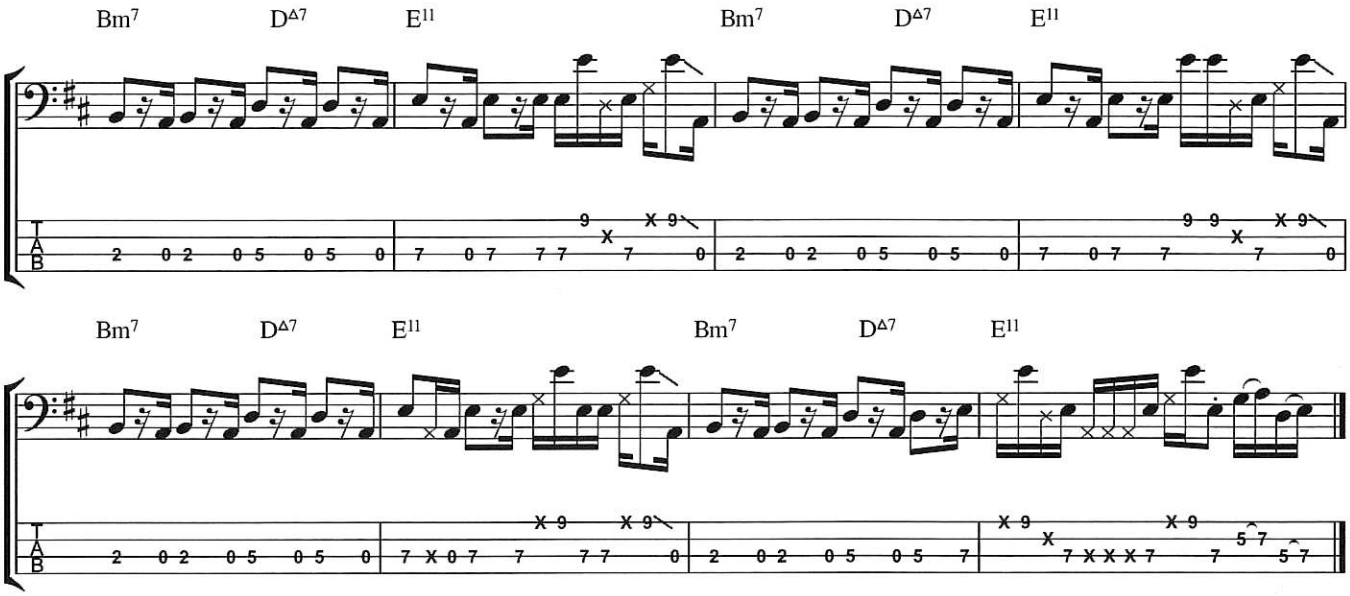
Intro/Chorus

The track opens with two hammer-ons, leading straight into a classic Bernard Edwards groove. All the trademarks are present and correct: stacatto notes, sixteenth note anticipations, octave jumps and ghost note-laden funk figures. Note Bernard's use of open strings as anticipations - this is very likely a James Jamerson influence. When playing the octave figure in the second and fourth bars of the line, I recommend using a rake for the ghost note in between the upper D's, and the lower D - a rake is where you simply drag your finger back across the strings after playing a note. Bernard plays a basic arpeggio figure in bar 5 (which calls to mind his part on 'We Are Family') and then follows it with a busy sixteenth note turnaround line in the next bar. The use of ghost notes and the sound of the attack leads me to believe he used his unique picking technique in this bar. You can also play this line using conventional fingerstyle technique - just be sure to get the ghost notes right. The following example is the Intro followed by the first Chorus.



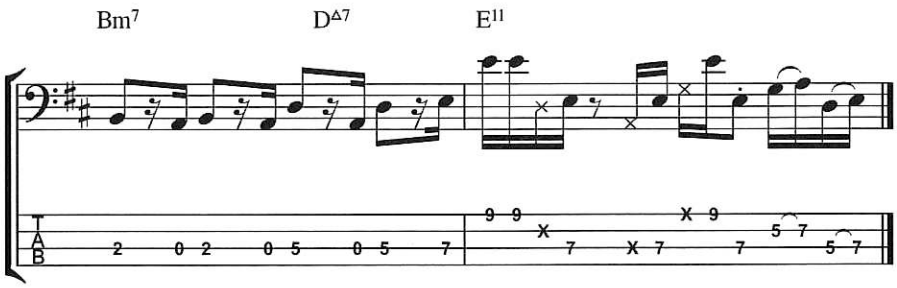
Verse

During the Verse, Bernard continues with the ideas that he introduced in the Chorus: open string anticipations, and octave figures. The octave figure in the second bar is easier if you play the ghost note on the G string before the E at the ninth fret. The Verse bassline ends with the same hammer-on figure that opened the track, leading us neatly back into the Chorus.



Verse Variation 1

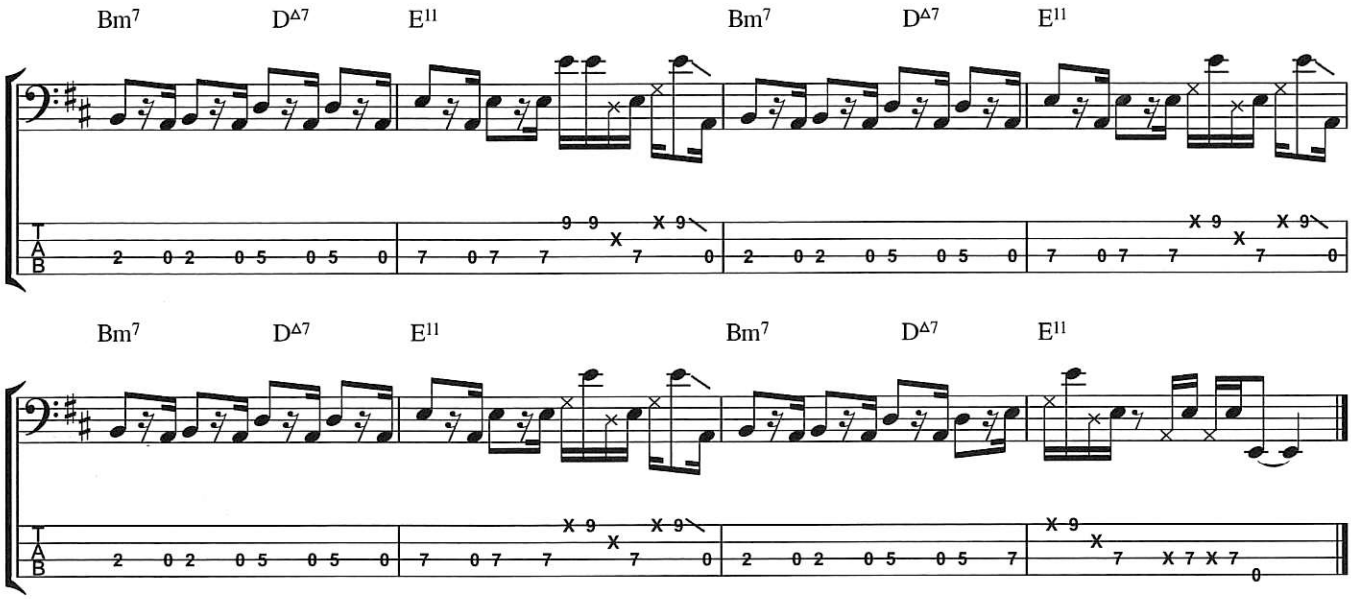
This is a small variation to the Verse bassline which can be heard at the end of the second Verse at CD time 1.30. Bernard throws a few extra octaves into the mix here.



Chapter 10 - Chic: Happy Man

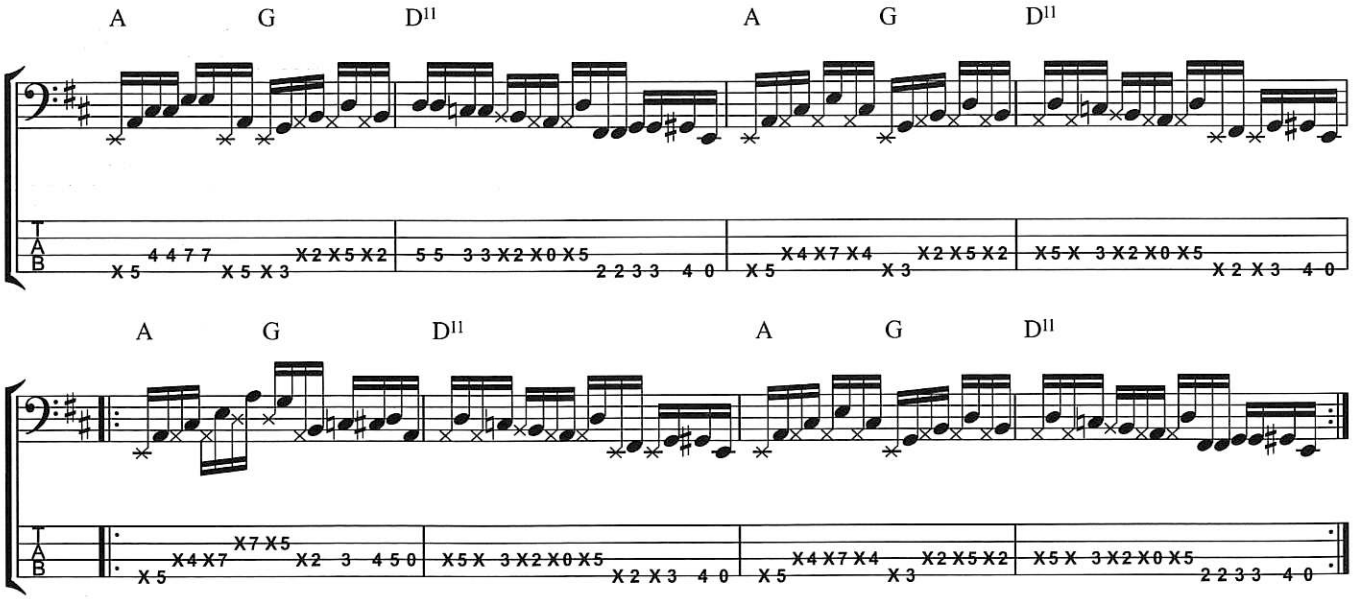
Guitar Solo

Bernard also varies his line slightly for the Guitar Solo:



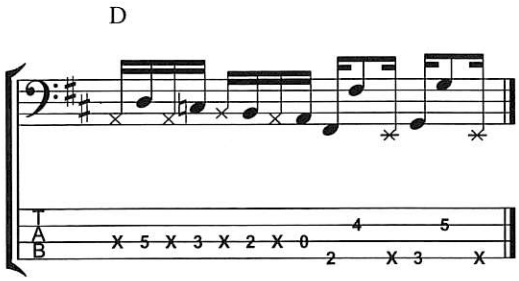
Outro

The Outro features a great walking bass figure from Bernard, who uses his picking technique to add ghost notes into every space available. You can capture the same sound by either working on developing Bernard's unusual technique, or by using a plectrum, or the double thumbing technique.



Outro Variation

This is a small variation on Bernard's Outro line that can be heard at CD time 4.13. Here, Bernard throws in some octave figures to break up the rhythm a little.

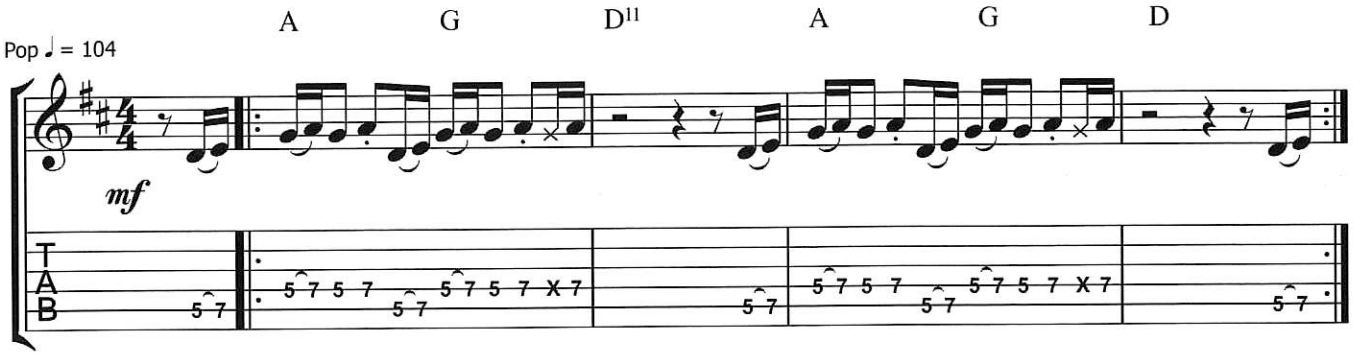


Guitar

Nile brings a lot of great guitar work to this song. Aside from his usual, inventive rhythm playing, we have a funky single note line, and a great guitar solo.

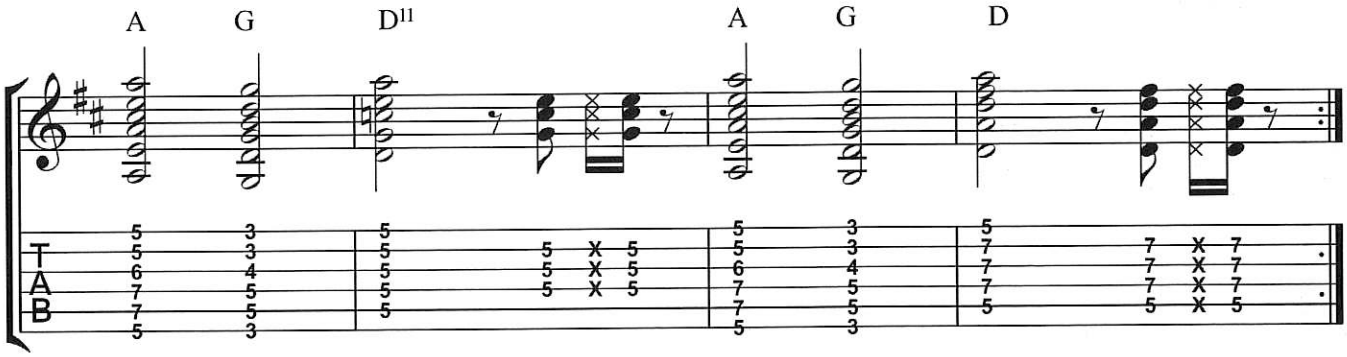
Intro/Chorus (Guitar 1)

This is the single note line that Nile plays during the Intro and Chorus sections of the song. Try to keep the notes short where marked with staccato dots.



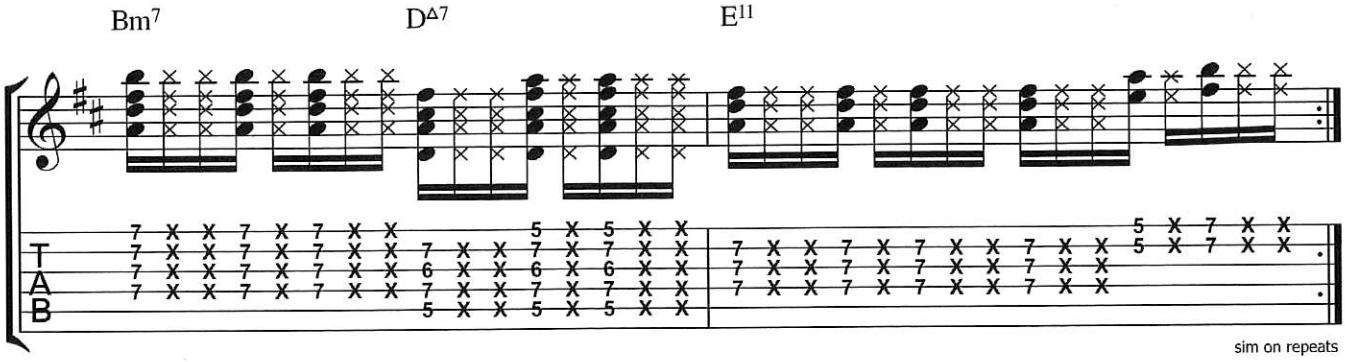
Intro/Chorus (Guitar 2)

A second, overdubbed guitar part provides the chords. Note the use of the D^{11} chord: this is something that Nile and Bernard use frequently in their music, and it adds an extra dimension to an otherwise very simple progression. Nile opts for basic chord shapes throughout this line.



Verse

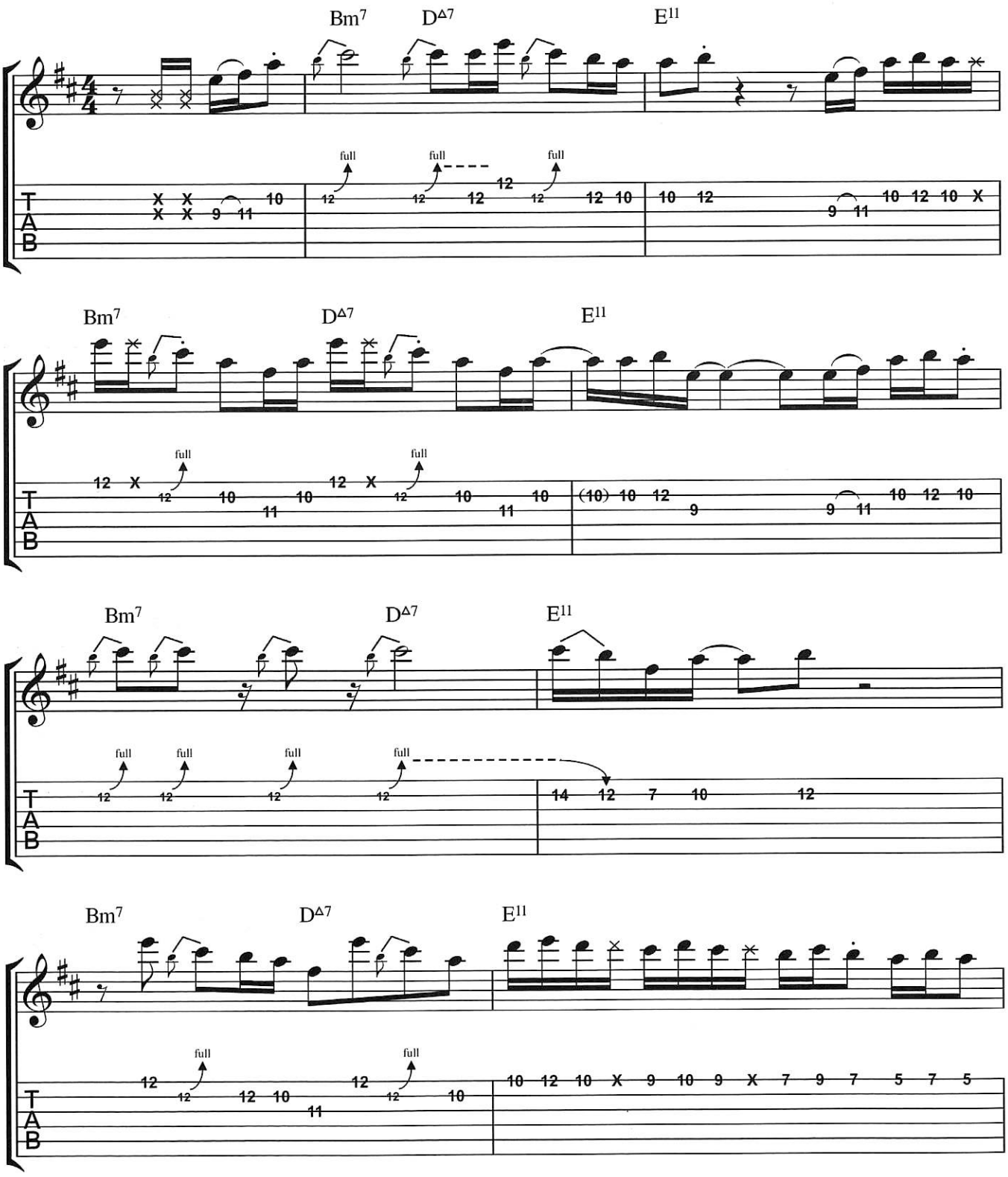
During the Verse Nile plays a sixteenth note rhythm part that uses a lot of ghost notes. As you can see, the eleventh chord (E^{11}) is used once again. Nile varies the rhythms slightly on the repeats, but this two bar chunk captures the essence of the part.

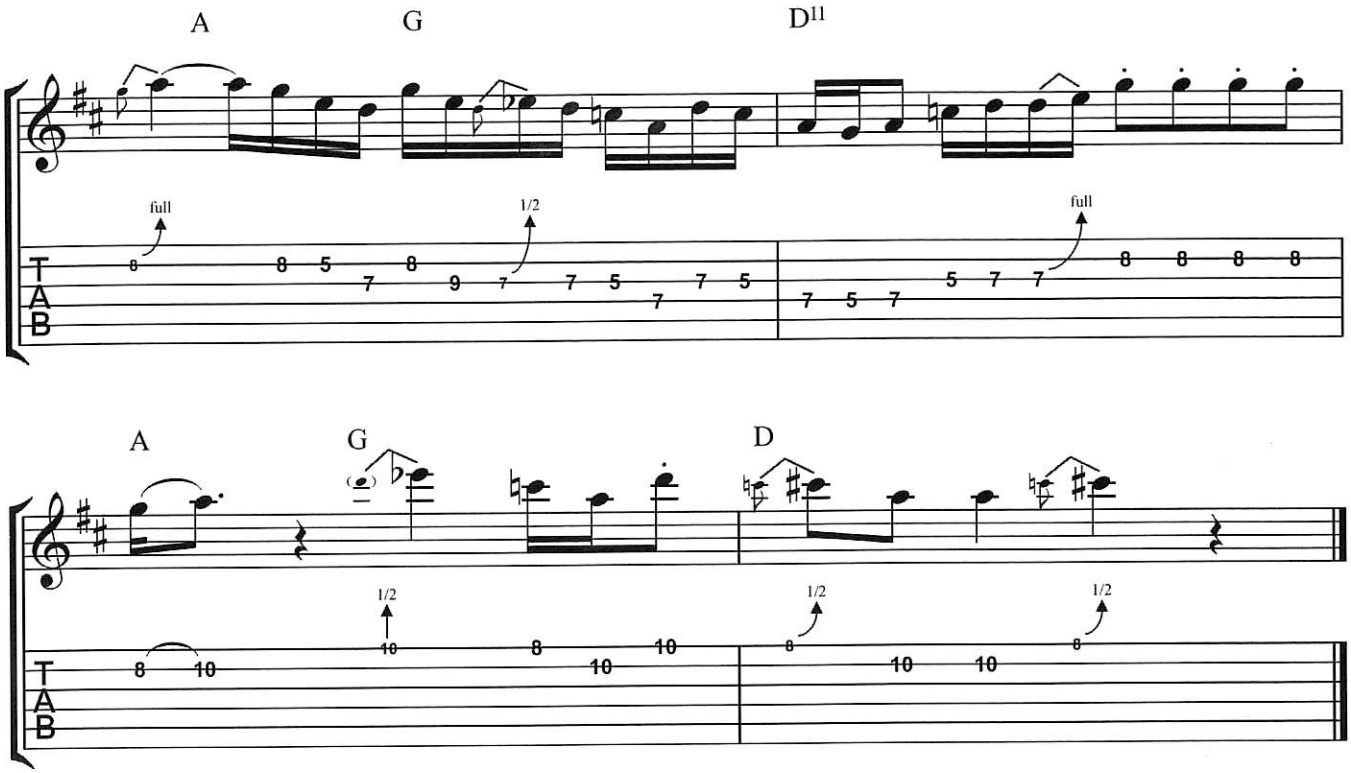


Chapter 10 - Chic: Happy Man

Guitar Solo

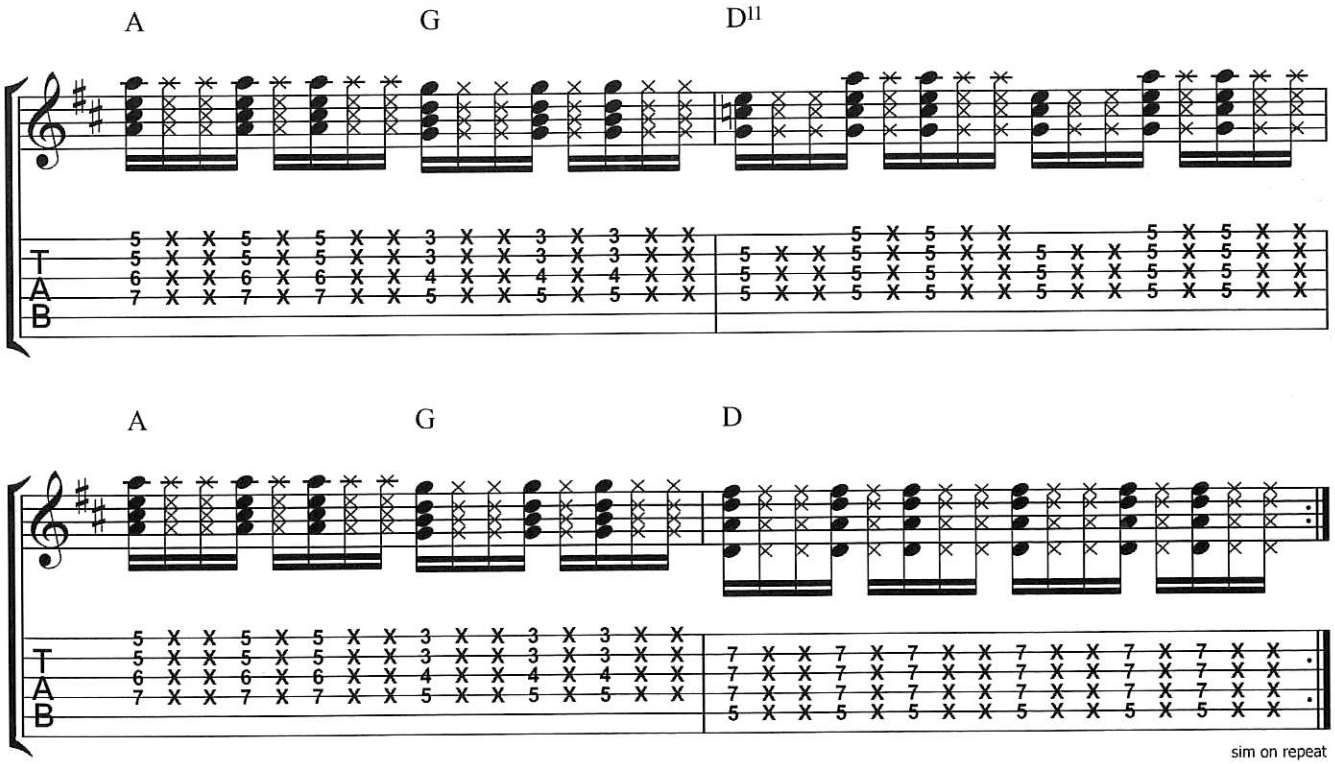
The following example is a complete transcription of Nile's guitar solo, which begins at CD time 1.52. The solo lasts for eight bars, although Nile continues to solo for four bars after the Chorus re-enters. In order to execute this solo as flawlessly as Nile does, you'll need to work on your string bending technique since this is heavily featured here.





Outro

During the Outro Nile adds some rhythmic flavour to the basic voicings that he used in the earlier Chorus sections. He plays only the upper parts of the chord here, and once again fills the rhythm up with ghost notes.



Chapter 11
He's The Greatest Dancer

Artist: Sister Sledge
Album: *We Are Family*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/ Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: #6 UK Chart, #9 US Pop Chart, #1 US R&B Chart

'He's the Greatest Dancer' was the first single from the 1979 *We Are Family* album. When released in March 1979 it went straight to the top of the US R&B Chart making the biggest hit yet for Sister Sledge. It continues to be a very popular song in the clubs, and can certainly be considered a disco classic.

This song follows the typical Rodgers/Edwards formula of having a Chorus first, followed by two Verses and Choruses, then an extended Breakdown section. As with many of their other songs, including 'We Are Family', the Breakdown is just an instrumental version of earlier grooves – in this case the Verse and Chorus grooves. Usually during the Breakdown sections certain instruments will drop out, and gradually re-enter in time for the final Chorus.

'He's The Greatest Dancer' was sampled by Will Smith for his 1998 hit song 'Getting' Jiggy With It', which reached number 3 in the UK Singles Charts. This song has added to the popularity of the original. Dannii Minogue also covered the song in December 2006.

Song Lyrics

Kathy Sledge's lead vocal for this track was reportedly recorded one line at a time, with her not having heard the song or lyrics before. This was done deliberately by Bernard and Nile so as to capture genuine spontaneity.

Oh-what-wow
He's the greatest dancer
Oh-what-wow
That I've ever seen
Oh-what-wow
He's the greatest dancer
Oh-what-wow

One night in a disco, on the outskirts of 'Frisco
I was cruisin' with my favourite gang
The place was so boring
Filled with out-of-towners touring
I knew that it wasn't my thing
I really wasn't caring, but I felt my eyes staring
At a guy who stood out in the crowd
He had the kind of body that would shame Adonis
And a face that would make any man proud

Oh-what-wow
He's the greatest dancer
Oh-what-wow
That I've ever seen
Oh-what-wow
He's the greatest dancer
Oh-what-wow

The champion of dance, his moves will put you in a trance
And he never leaves the disco alone
Arrogance but not conceit, as a man he's complete
My crème de la crème, please take me home
He wears the finest clothes
The best designers, heaven knows
Ooh, from his head down to his toes
Halston, Gucci, Fiorucci
He looks like a still, that man is dressed to kill

Oh-what-wow
He's the greatest dancer
Oh-what-wow
That I've ever seen (x2)
Oh-what-wow

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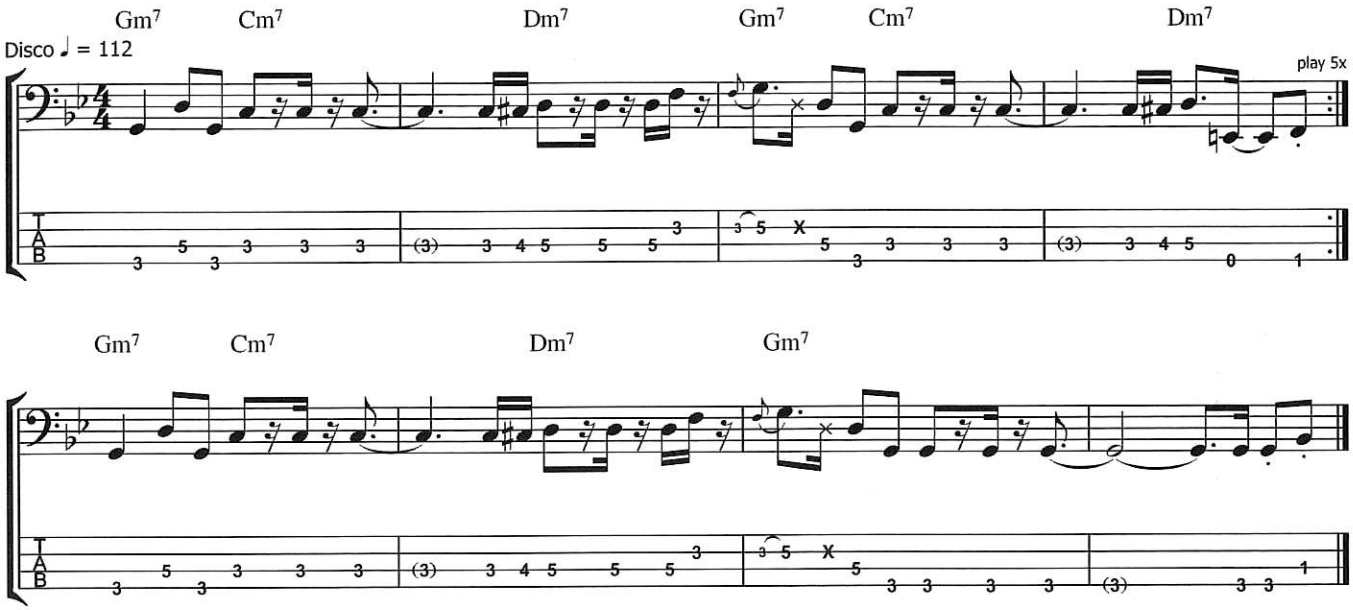
Bass Guitar

Bernard plays a simple, but effective groove throughout 'He's the Greatest Dancer', but it is without a doubt the perfect part for the song. As ever, his tight, funky use of syncopation is the key to his groove, and his minimal fills and variations are all that is required from the bass. Make sure you pay close attention to rests throughout this line as they really help the part to groove. Don't be tempted to overplay on this piece either – simplicity is the key to the groove here.

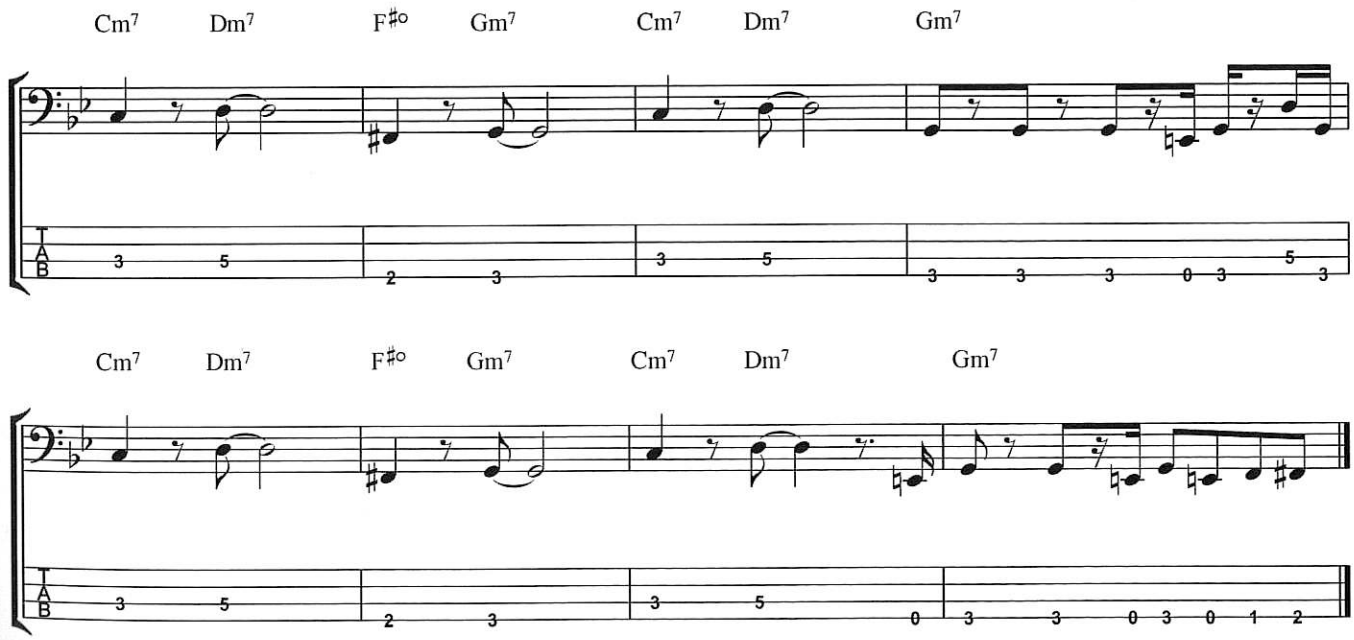
Intro/Verse

For the Verse section Bernard opts for chord tones with the occasional chromatic passing note. Rests and ghost notes are crucial to the syncopations here, so be careful to play them as written. This line is used for the Intro and Verse to this song. The first four bars are repeated (five times in the Intro, three in the Verses), with the second four bars setting up the Chorus.



Chorus/Breakdown

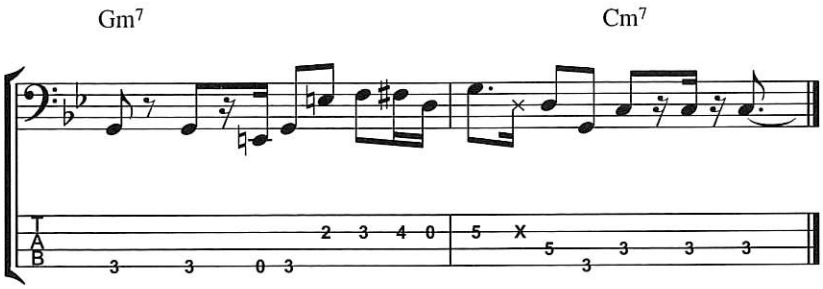
Bernard simplifies things even further with this bassline, which is for the Chorus/Breakdown sections. Root notes are all that are needed for this line, with just a subtle fill in the fourth bar. The fill in the last bar makes use of chromatic passing notes and sets up the transition to the Verse.



Chapter 11 - Sister Sledge: He's The Greatest Dancer

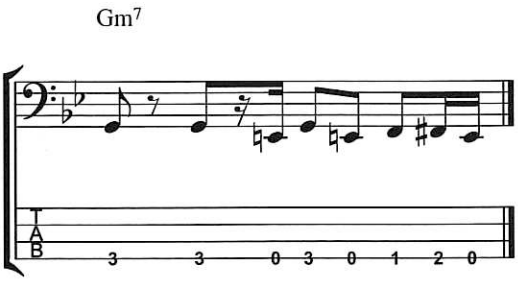
Bass Variation 1

This is the final bar of the first Chorus, leading into the first bar of the second Verse. Notice that Bernard plays his chromatic fill an octave higher this time (on the D string), setting up an octave-fifth-root descending figure at the beginning of the second bar. You can hear this at CD time 1.59.

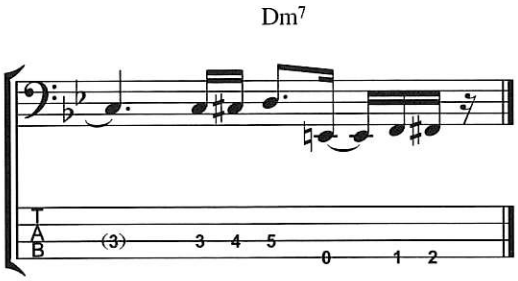


Bass Variations 2 & 3

This fill is a small variation on the chromatic fill used at various points of the song. This variation occurs at the end of the second Chorus, (CD time 3.07) and sets up the extended groove section which is based on the Verse.



This is another small variation on the chromatic fill. This one sets up the Breakdown section, where the bass drops out and can be heard at CD time 3.41.

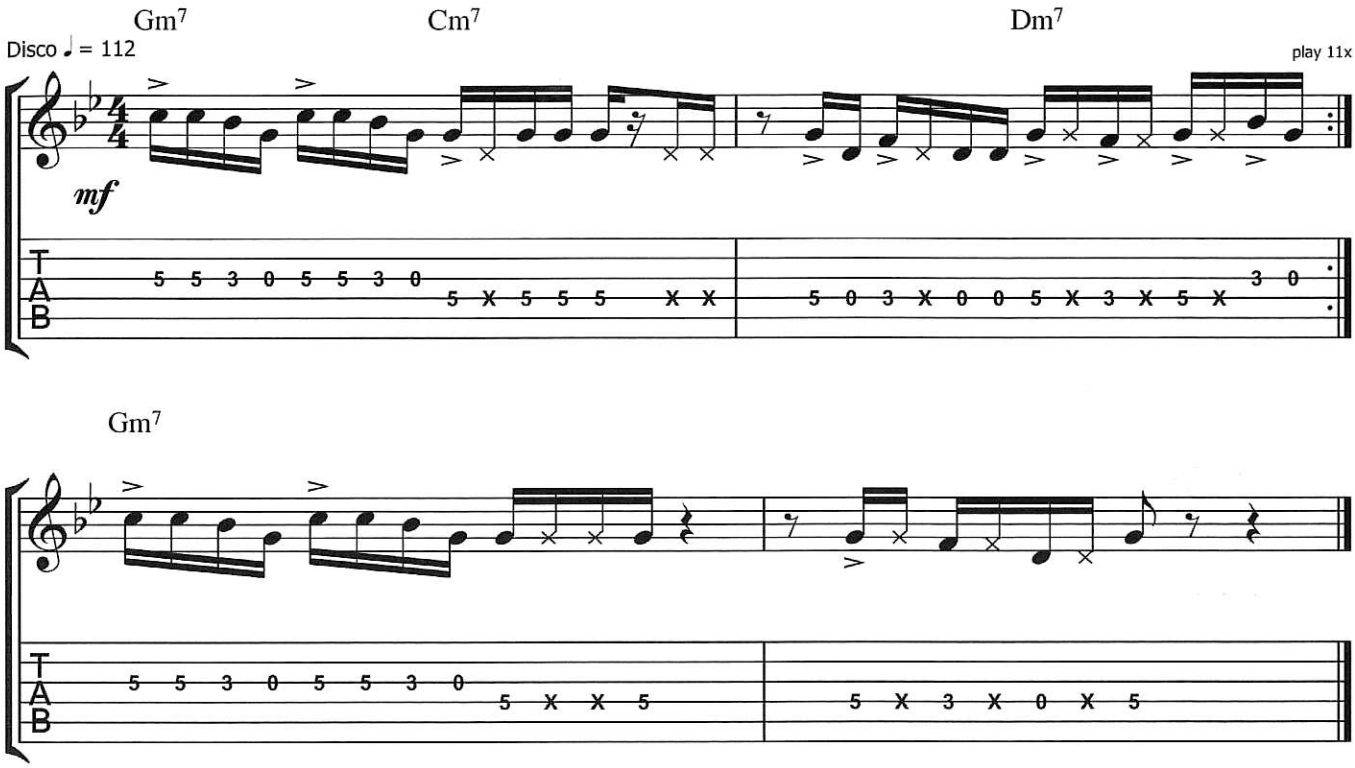


Guitar

This song is a great rhythm guitar workout for Nile, who came up with two fantastic contrasting guitar parts.

Intro/Verse

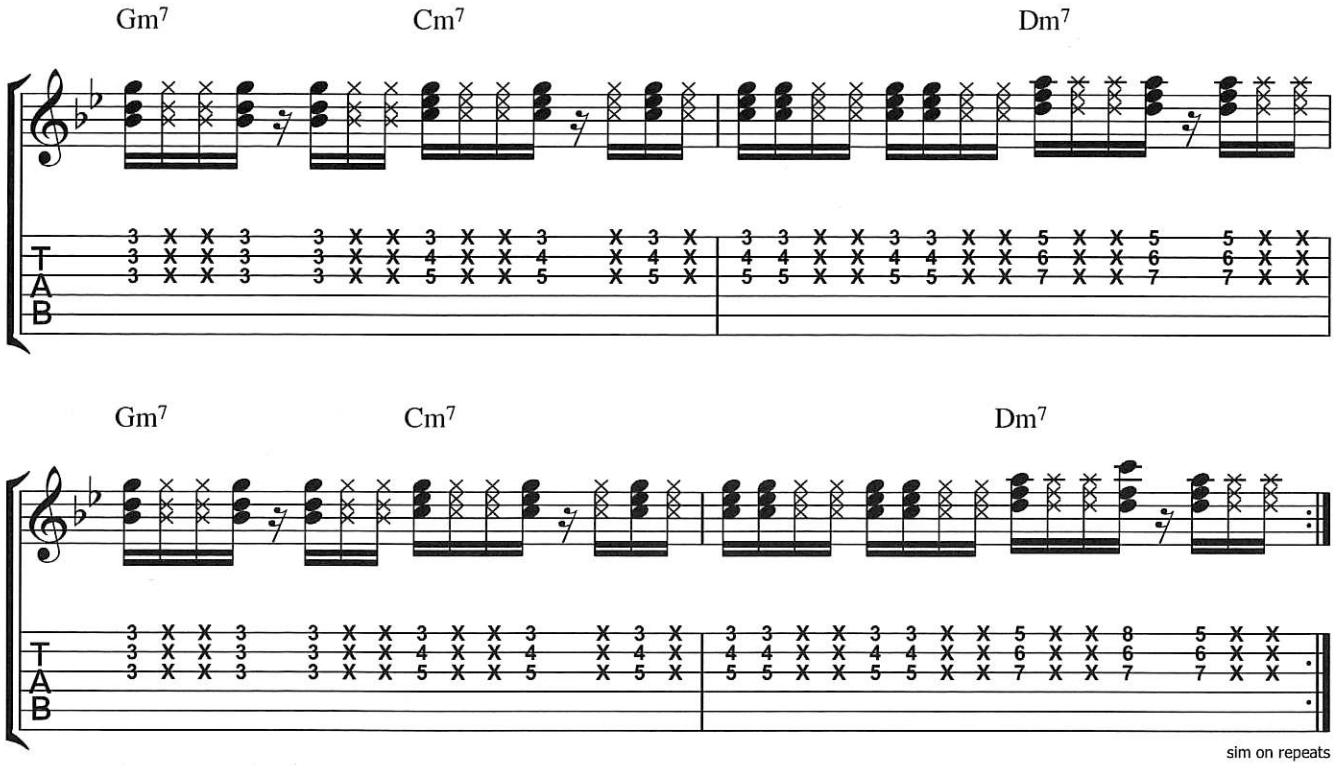
This is the muted sixteenth note guitar line that is one of the most memorable parts of the song. You'll need to keep the notes short and crisp and make sure the ghost notes are indeed ghost notes – this is crucial to the feel of the line. Rests and accents are also very important here. In terms of ghost notes and palm muting, Nile varies this line slightly throughout the song. However, the basic line remains the same and any small variations are not worthy of transcription. The following transcription is for the extended Intro to the song: the first two bars are repeated eleven times, and the second two bars occur as the Intro moves into the first Chorus.



Chapter 11 - Sister Sledge: He's The Greatest Dancer

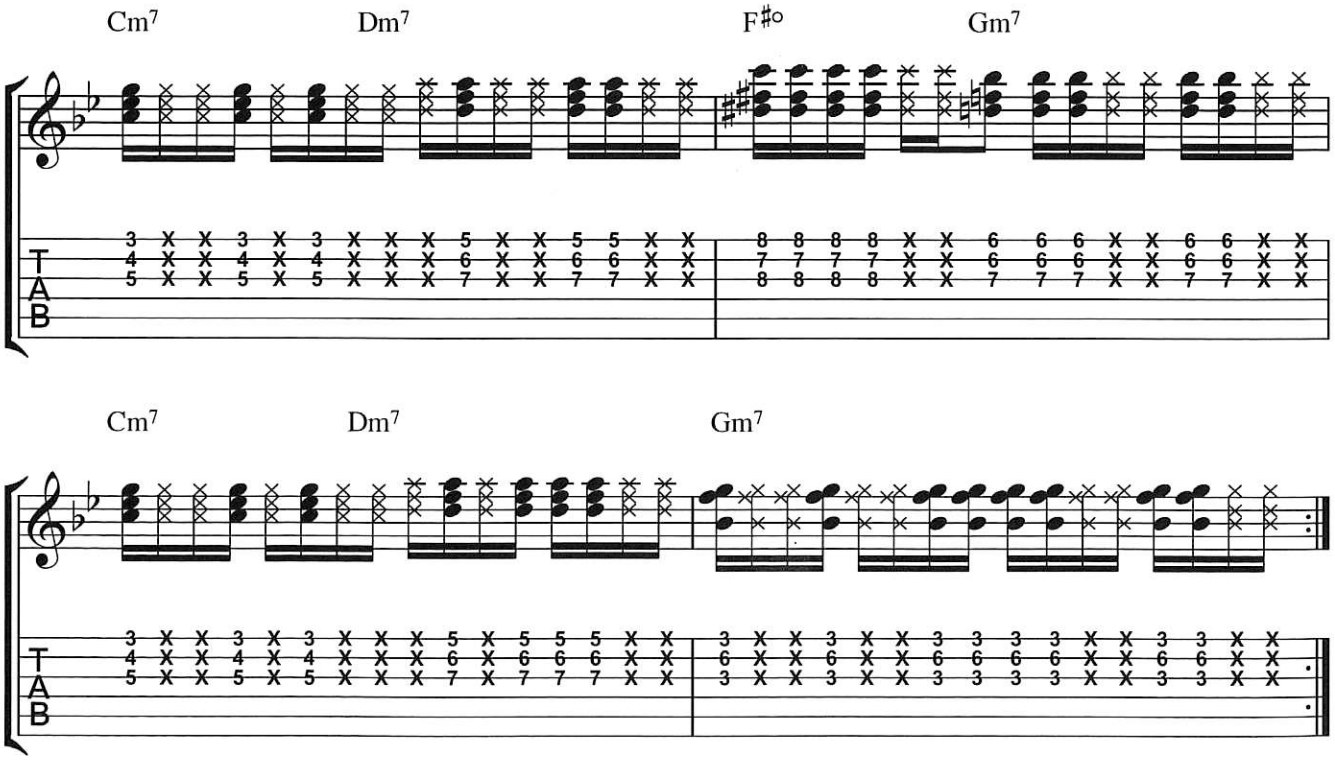
Intro/Verse (Guitar 2)

This is the second guitar part, and is a chordal rhythm figure. Nile uses three note voicings on the top three strings, filling out the gaps in the sixteenth note-based line with ghost notes. The fourth bar contains a small variation, where Nile adds the flat seventh of the Dm^7 chord (C) to the voicing.



Chorus

This is the rhythm part for the Chorus section of the song. Again, Nile favours voicings on the top three strings (this is very common in funk and disco music). His voicing of the $F\sharp^o$ chord is fantastic, and is one of the most 'ear-grabbing' moments in the guitar part. Notice how once again he fills up all the gaps in the rhythms with ghost notes. This is also very common in funk and disco music.



Chapter 12
We Are Family

Artist: Sister Sledge
Album: *We Are Family*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: #8 UK Chart, #2 US Pop Chart, #1 US R&B Chart

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'We Are Family' was the second single from the 1979 Sister Sledge album of the same name. Following the enormous success of 'He's The Greatest Dancer' was never going to be easy, but with this anthemic track, Sister Sledge scored another huge hit and with the help of Bernard Edwards and Nile Rodgers, created a timeless disco classic. The song scored well in all the charts and with its strong, family-orientated lyrics it was quickly adopted by the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team, and has since become a gay anthem. The song is notable for the impressive vocal performance by 19 year old Kathy Sledge, who reputedly recorded the vocal in one take.

The song has been covered by the Spice Girls, Babes In Toyland, and Jordan Pruitt, and was rerecorded by Sister Sledge in 2001 as a benefit song following the September 11th terrorist attacks.

In Daryl Easlea's book *Everybody Dance: Chic and the Politics of Disco*, Nile Rodgers is quoted as saying that he first heard one of the riffs used in this song (the chromatic transition riff) in another track by a New York band called The Children of God.

Song Lyrics

Like the music, the lyrics to this song, were written by Bernard Edwards and Nile Rodgers. These strong, family orientated words were perfect for family group Sister Sledge and are well known to people from all over the world.

We are family
I got all my sisters with me
We are family
Get up everybody and sing (x2)

Everyone can see we're together
As we walk on by
(Fly) And we fly just like birds of a feather
I won't tell no lie
(All) All of the people around us they say
Can they be that close?
Just let me state for the record
We're giving love in a family dose

We are family
I got all my sisters with me
We are family
Get up everybody and sing
We are family
I got all my sisters with me
We are family
Get up everybody and sing

Living life is fun and we've just begun
To get our share of this world's delights
(High!) High hopes we have for the future
And our goal's in sight
(We!) No, we don't get depressed
Here's what we call our golden rule
Have faith in you and the things you do
You won't go wrong
This is our family Jewel

We are family
I got all my sisters with me
We are family
Get up everybody and sing
We are family
I got all my sisters with me
We are family
Get up everybody and sing

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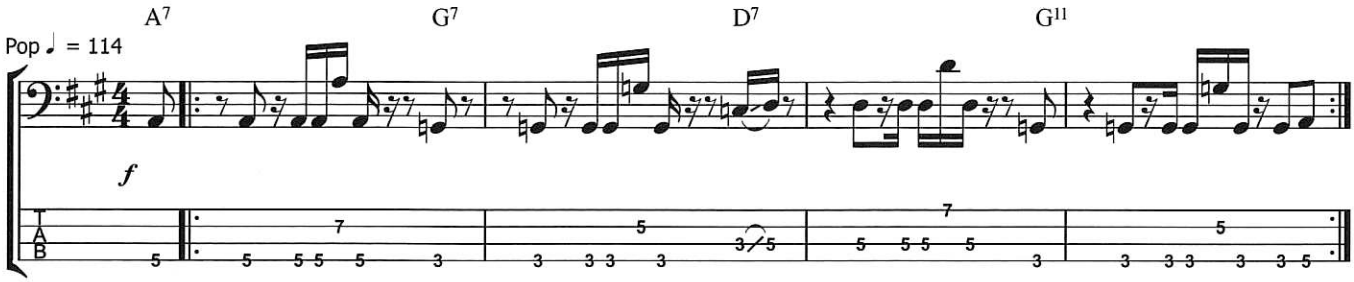
Chapter 12 - Sister Sledge: We Are Family

Bass Guitar

'We Are Family' contains a fantastic performance from Bernard Edwards, and his playing throughout is tight, funky and very memorable. Note that all timings in these notes refer to the full length version of this song, not the single release.

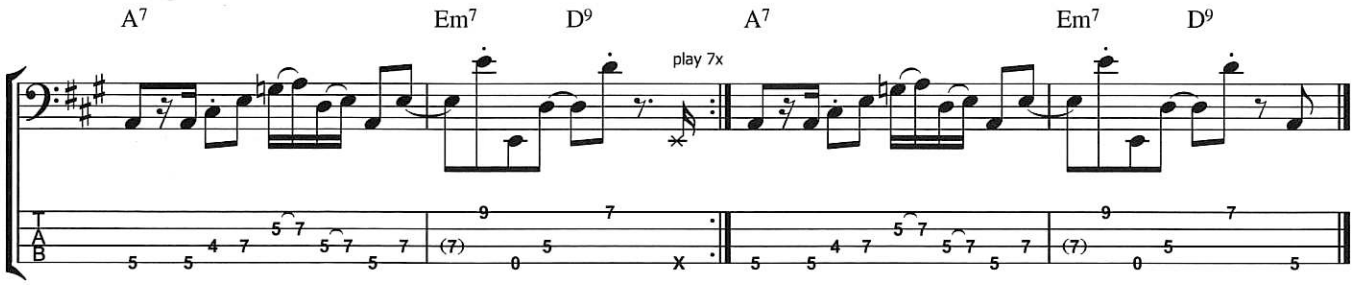
Intro/Chorus/Breakdown

The Chorus bass part is interesting since Bernard doesn't play on beat one of any bar, choosing instead to anticipate each beat by an eighth note. Nile Rodgers also plays these anticipations, and this is what lends the track much of its feel. The sixteenth note figure of root-octave-root in each bar is extremely tricky to execute cleanly, but it's figures such as this that define Bernard's unique style.



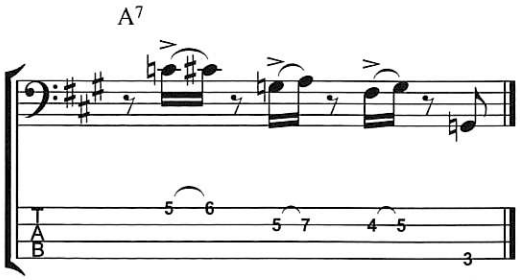
Verse

For the Verse Bernard plays an ascending arpeggio figure on the A^7 chord which he tops off with another series of descending hammer-ons. The second bar of the Verse riff contains 'disco-octaves', literally a root-octave figure that was the mainstay of hundreds of disco and funk bass grooves.

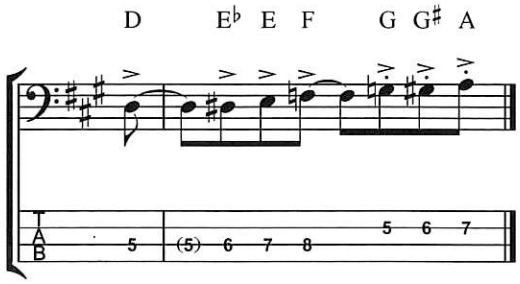


Important Fills

This series of descending hammer-ons first occurs at CD time 0.18, and is then heard at various points during the Chorus and Breakdown sections. It's a classic funk lick that provides a momentary spotlight for the bass in this track.



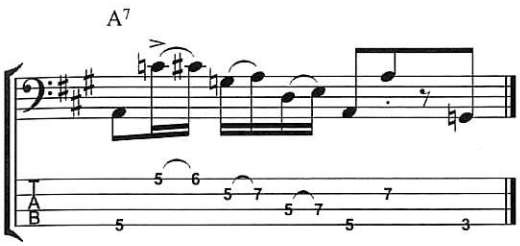
This ascending figure can be heard in the closing seconds of the single edit of this song. It functions as a transitional figure between repeats of the Chorus groove, and is used several times during the Breakdown section on the full length version.



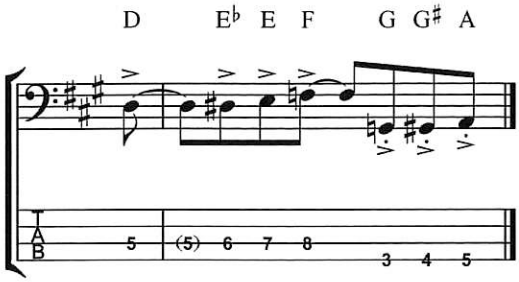
The Chorus and Verse bass parts that we have discussed so far make up the vast majority of the shortened single release of this track. However, the much longer album track has several further choice moments, mostly in the long Breakdown section. The Breakdown is a repeated sixteen bar section that is comprised of four repeats of the Chorus groove, with an chromatic ascending figure in the sixteenth bar.

Bass Variations 1 & 2

Bernard opens the Breakdown section with this fill, which you can hear at CD time 3.21. This fill occurs several times during the Breakdown.

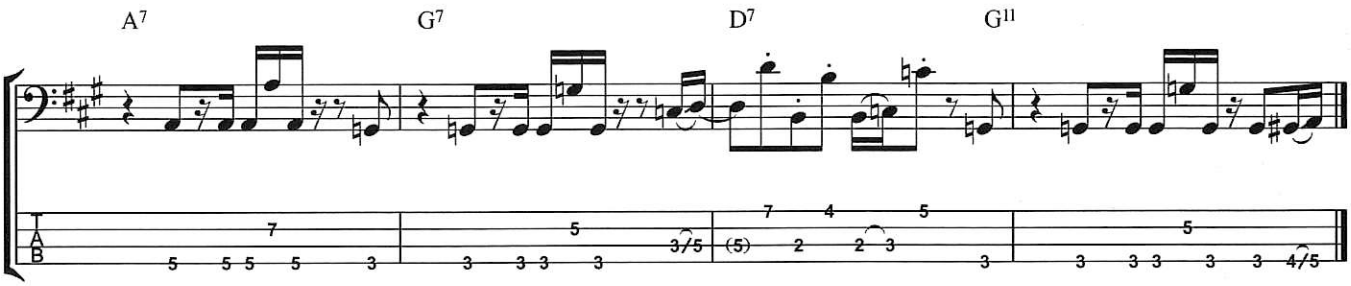


In this variation, Bernard drops the second half of the ascending fill to the lower octave. You can hear this line at CD time 4.59.



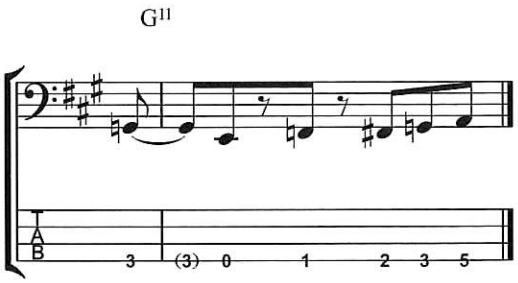
Bass Variation 3

In this variation, Bernard plays a funky disco octave lick on the D^7 bar. His note choices of root, sixth (B) and flat seventh (C) are perfect for the D^7 chord, and sound great. You can hear this line at CD time 5.17.

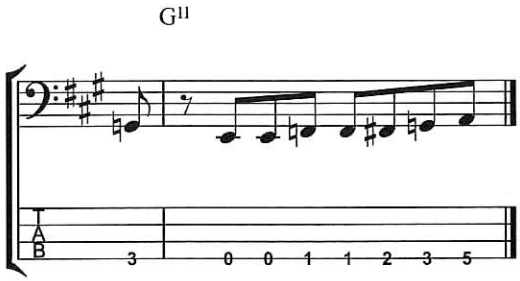


Bass Variations 4 & 5

In this line, Bernard plays an ascending chromatic lick in the G^{11} bar. You can hear this line at CD time 5.48 and again at 6.21.

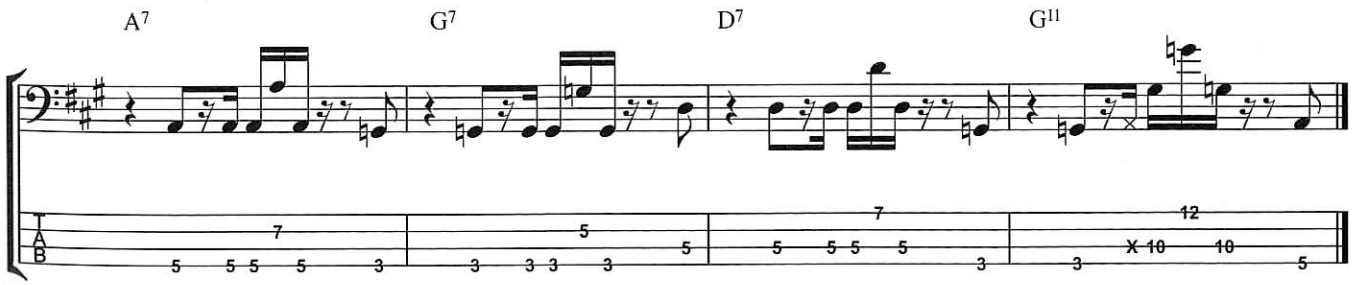


This is a variation on the ascending chromatic lick from the previous example. You can hear this at CD time 7.02.



Bass Variation 6

Finally, Bernard moves the root-octave-root figure up an octave in the fourth bar of this variation. You can hear this at CD time 7.54.



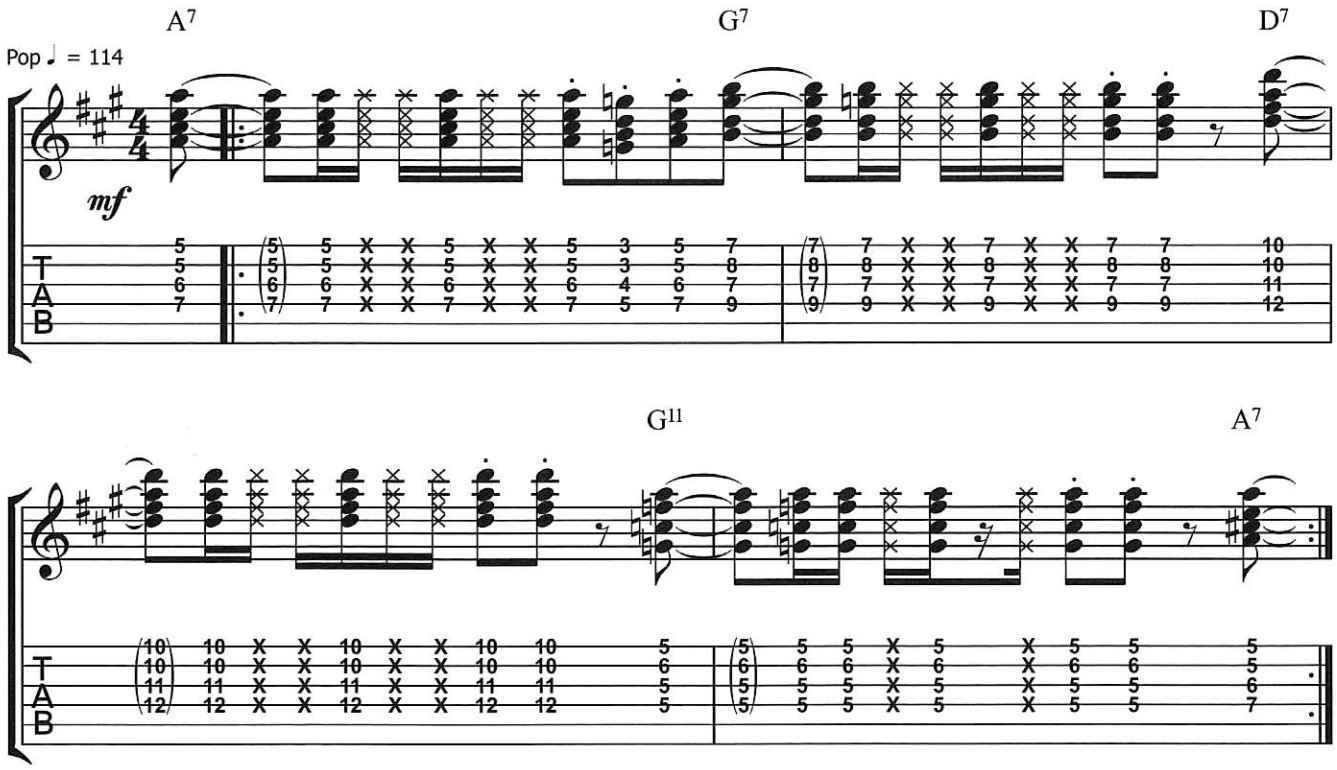
Chapter 12 - Sister Sledge: We Are Family

Guitar

Throughout 'We Are Family' Nile Rodgers plays a relatively simple rhythm guitar part. As is common with Nile's guitar work, there is little variation on the established part.

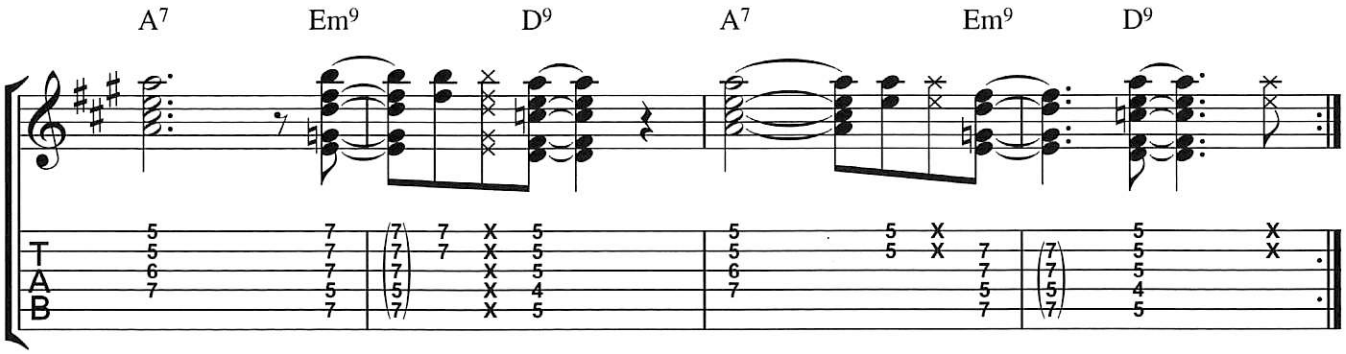
Intro/Chorus/Breakdown

During the Chorus sections Nile plays a sixteenth note-based rhythm track in which he matches Bernard's eighth note anticipations. Note the staccato eighth notes in each bar - these are commonplace in Nile's playing and certainly make his part lock into the song.



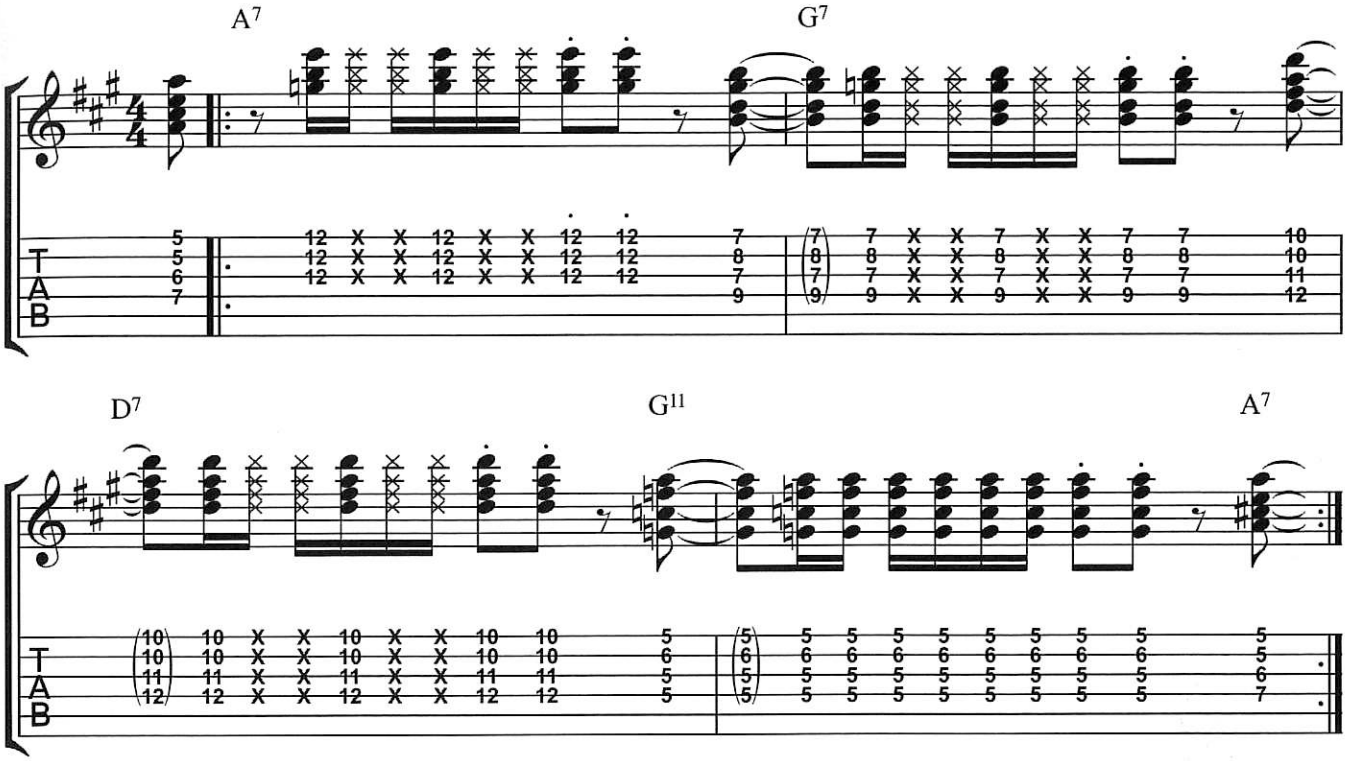
Verse

During the Verse Nile plays a sparse rhythm part. Notice how he lets the A chord hang for three beats in the first bar of the two bar figure - presumably, with such a busy bass part, it seemed logical to keep things simple here. This also keeps the mood of the Verse different to the Chorus, and is a good example of how Bernard and Nile wove their separate parts together to create one powerful groove.



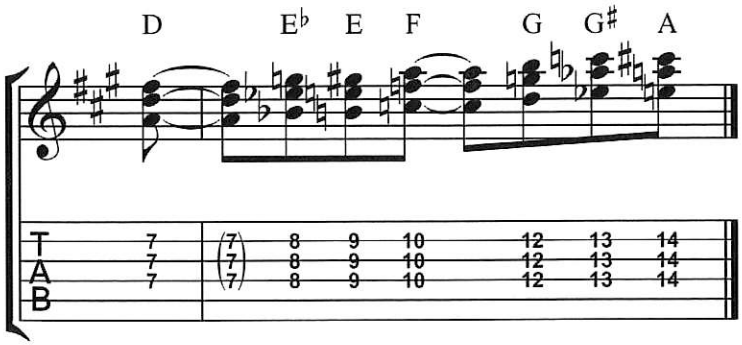
Guitar Variation 1

There is little variation in the guitar part for this song, aside from this slightly altered part which can be heard at CD time 3.30. Here Niles changes the voicing for the A^9 chord to be G, B and E, the flat seventh, ninth and fifth respectively.



Important Fills

For the chromatic riffs that occur periodically throughout the Breakdown section, Nile plays a series of ascending major chords.



Chapter 13
Lost In Music

Artist: Sister Sledge
Album: *We Are Family*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: #17 UK Chart, #35 US R&B Chart

'Lost In Music' was the third single to be released from the *We Are Family* album. Following mega-hits such as 'He's The Greatest Dancer' and 'We Are Family' was an almost impossibe task, and this track was unable to scale the charts in the same fashion as its predecessors: in the US it hit #35 in the R&B Chart, and failed to scratch the Pop Charts completely. It did better in the UK, where it reached #17. This lack of chart success should not be blamed on the song however: by the time of its release, the 'disco-sucks' movement was in full swing, and this, combined with the immense exposure granted to the previous two singles were enough to preclude the track from a higher chart position. The 1984 Duran Duran remix however saw it reach #4 in the UK Pop Chart, and today the song remains a disco classic. It is also considered to be one of Bernard and Nile's finest works.

Song Lyrics

The lyrics to this song reflect the attitude of any aspiring musician. For Nile Rodgers in particular the song has a special meaning, since the title is a phrase he often used when immersed in his work. The lyrics also reflect his time working day jobs in record stores and repairing guitars. This song features another outstanding vocal performance from the young Kathy Sledge. Of particular note is her ear-grabbing use of the flat fifth on the word 'temptation' from the first Verse.

We're lost in music
Caught in a trap
No turnin' back
We're lost in music
We're lost in music
Feel so alive
I quit my 9 to 5
We're lost in music

Have you ever seen
Some people lose everything
First to go is their mind.
Responsibility, to me is a tragedy
I'll get a job some other time
I want to join a band
And play in front of crazy fans
Yes, I call that temptation
Give me the melody
That's all that I ever need
The music is my salvation

We're lost in music
Caught in a trap
No turnin' back
We're lost in music

We're lost in music
Feel so alive
I quit my 9 to 5
We're lost in music

Mmm, hmm, in the spotlight
The band plays so very tight
Each and every night,
It's not vanity, to me, it's my sanity
I could never survive
Some people ask me
What are you gonna be
Why don't you go get a job,
All that I could say
I won't give up my music
Not me, not now, no way, no how

We're lost in music
Caught in a trap
No turnin' back
We're lost in music
We're lost in music
Feel so alive
I quit my 9 to 5
We're lost in music

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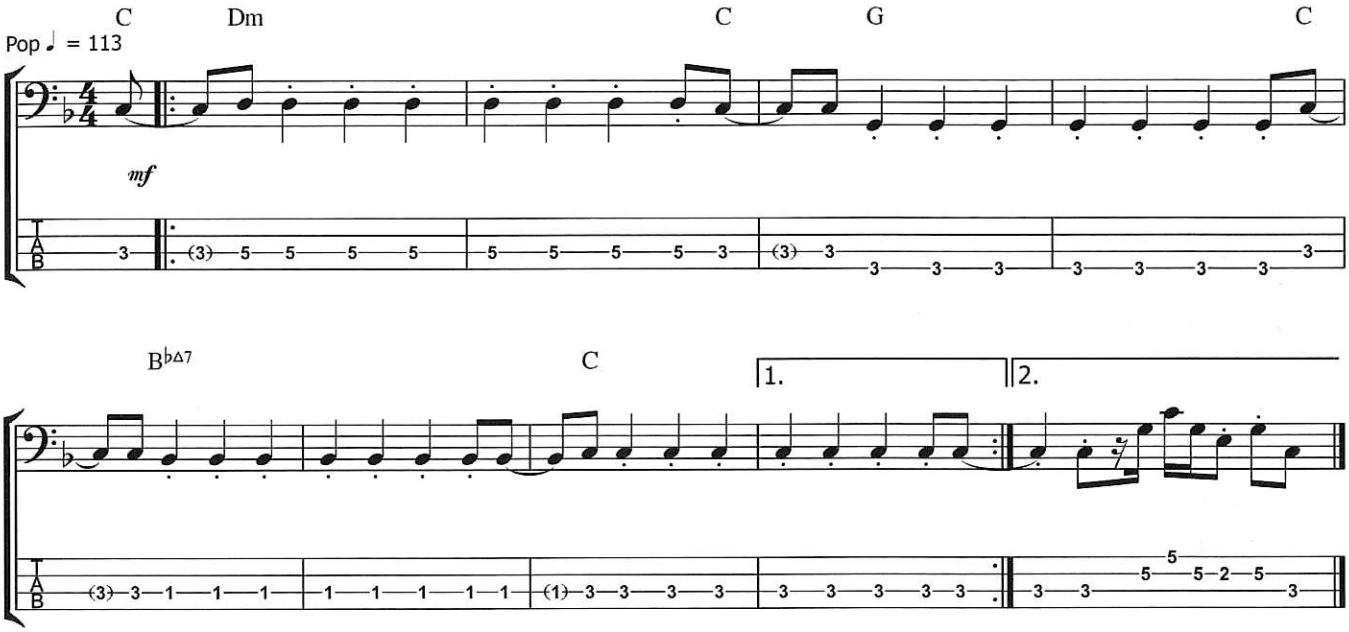
Bass Guitar

Bass-wise, this song is one of the simplest in the book. It is, however, an education in groove and the proper use of space in a bassline. Bernard's mastery of staccato grooves is forefront here, and you should listen closely to the way he lets this line breathe throughout the song.

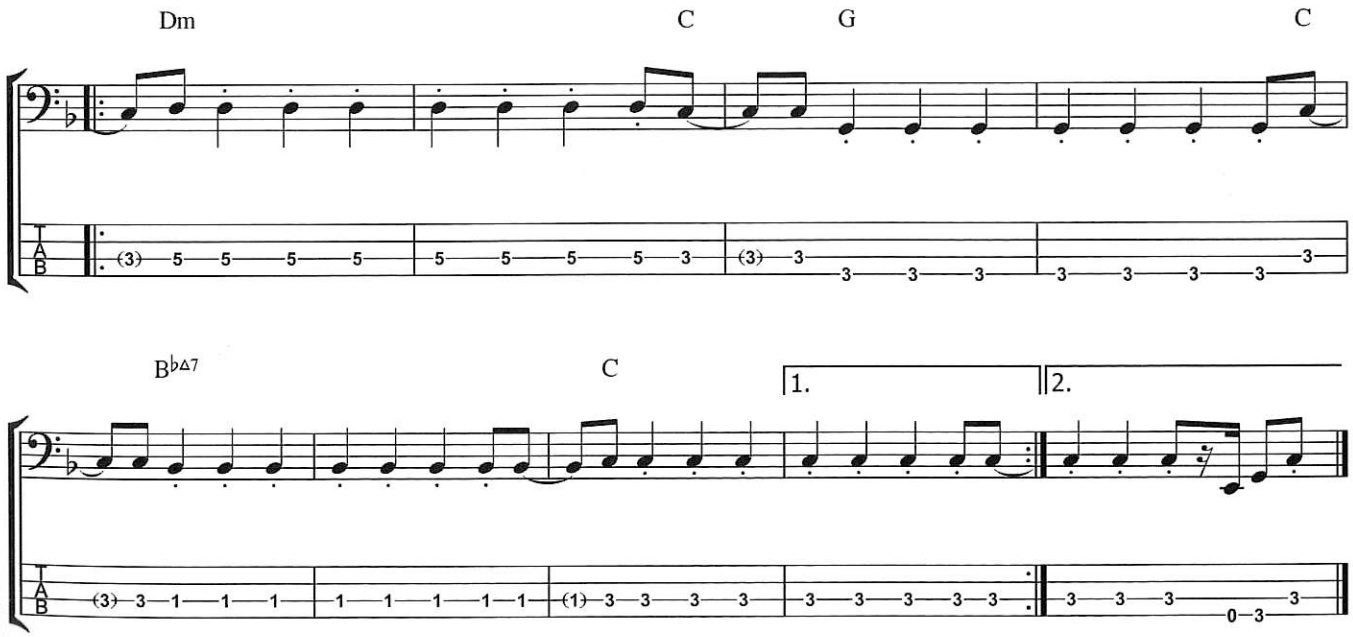
Intro

The track begins on the 'and', or upbeat of beat 4. Bernard follows the chord change, then quickly settles into a simple staccato line using only the root of the chord. He maintains this approach throughout much of the tune, allowing himself only brief moments of melodic invention: the fill at the end of this section - which leads from the Intro to the first Chorus - is a great example.



Chorus

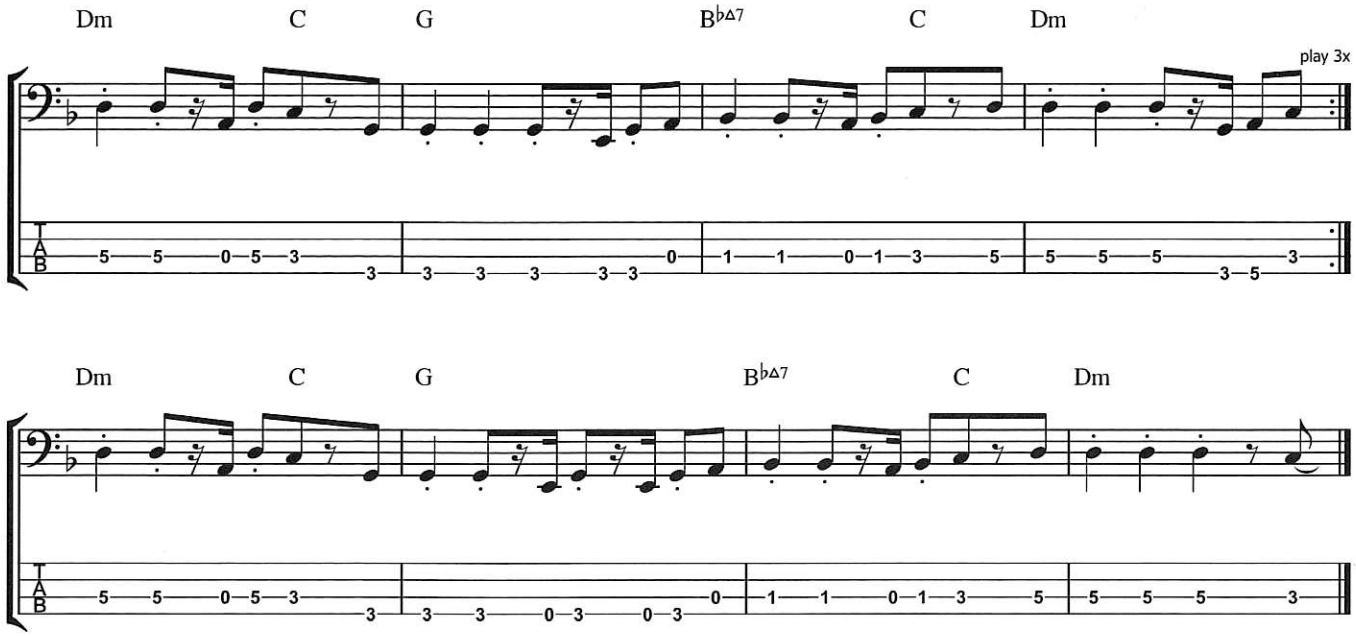
Bernard maintains the same feel for the Chorus. This is a transcription of the first Chorus - essentially identical to the Intro groove with the exception of the fill in the last bar which links to the first Verse.



Chapter 13 - Sister Sledge: Lost In Music

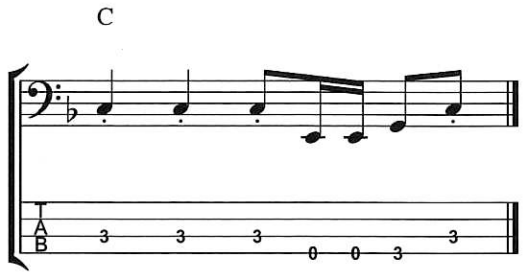
Verse

Bernard continues with his staccato bassline for the Verse sections of the song. Of particular note in this section are his use of sixteenth-note anticipations. The pitch of these is much less important than the rhythm - they add 'bounce' to the line. Listen closely to the track in order to master the way these notes affect the overall groove.



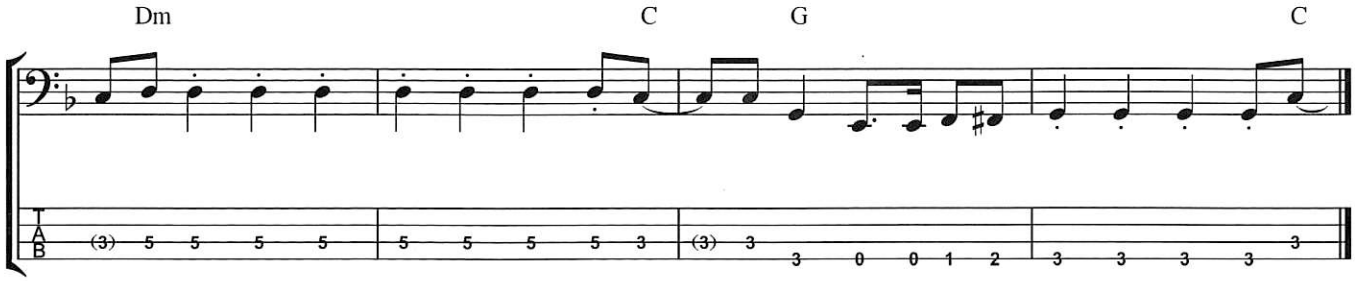
Bass Variation 1

This fill comes at the end of the first Verse. This is a basic embellishment on the fill at the end of the first Chorus, the only difference being the extra sixteenth note E. You can hear this fill at CD time 2.13.



Bass Variation 2

This variation (which is really just a fill in the third bar of the sequence) comes towards the end of the track, at CD time 4.12. Bernard moves from the root of the G chord (G) down to the sixth (the open E), and walks chromatically back up. A simple, but effective fill.

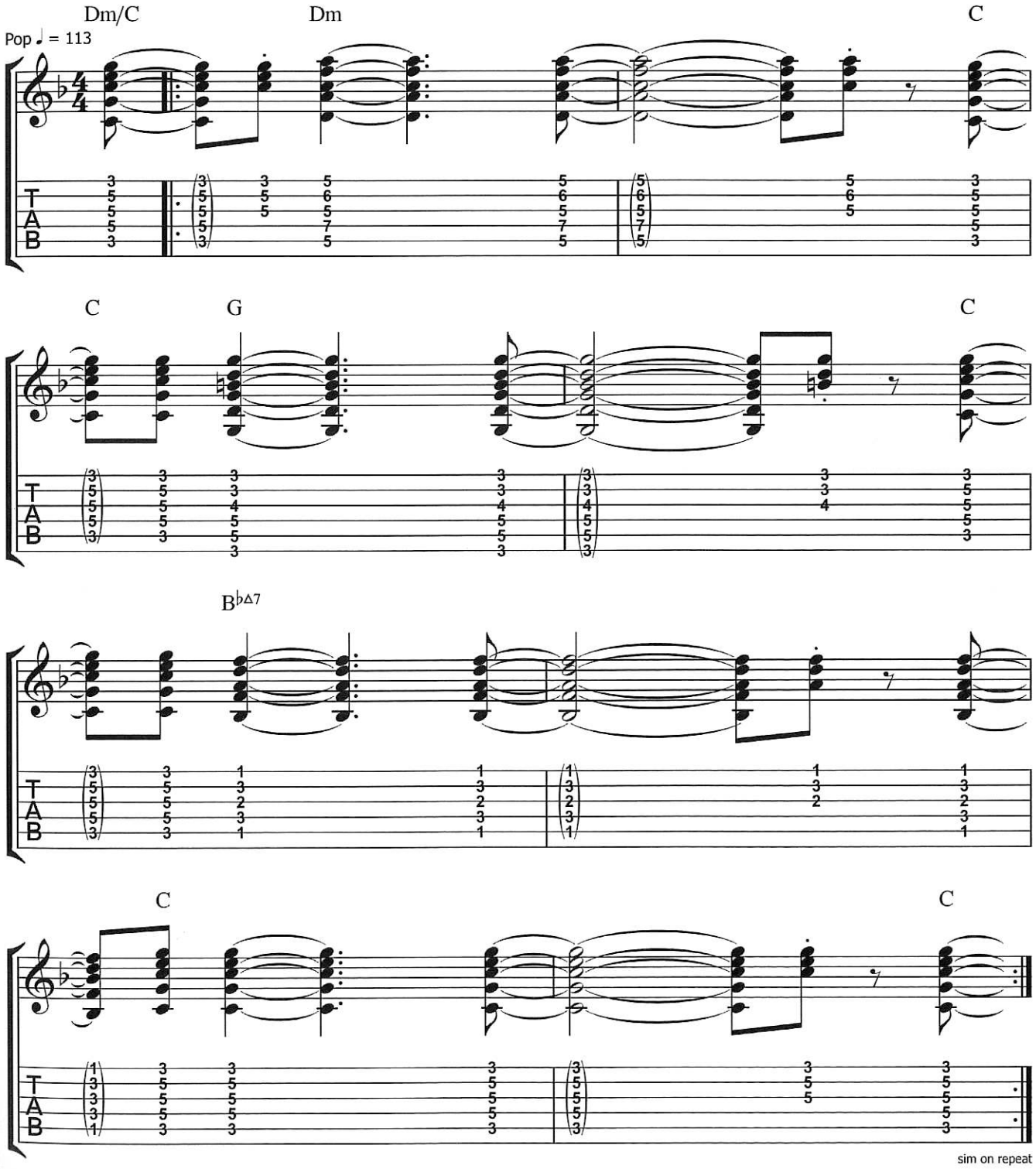


Guitar

Nile plays a fairly simple line throughout 'Lost In Music', outlining the chords in a fairly straightforward fashion, and adding in some funky upper register flourishes.

Intro

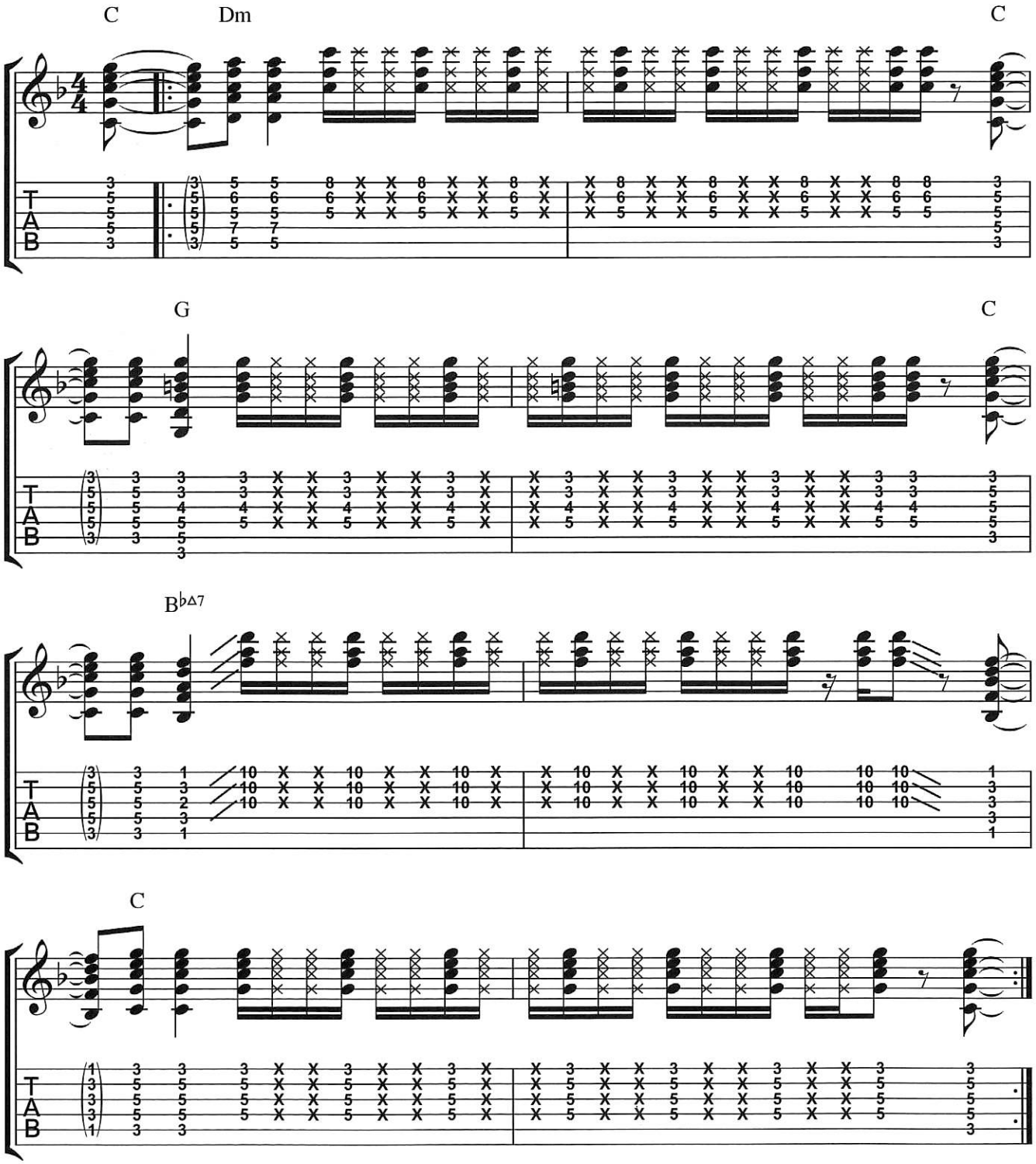
This is the part that Nile plays during the Intro. As you can see, he simply follows the rhythm of the chord sequence, occasionally throwing in some extra upbeat strums. These are followed immediately by a rest, so be sure to keep them short and sweet.



Chapter 13 - Sister Sledge: Lost In Music

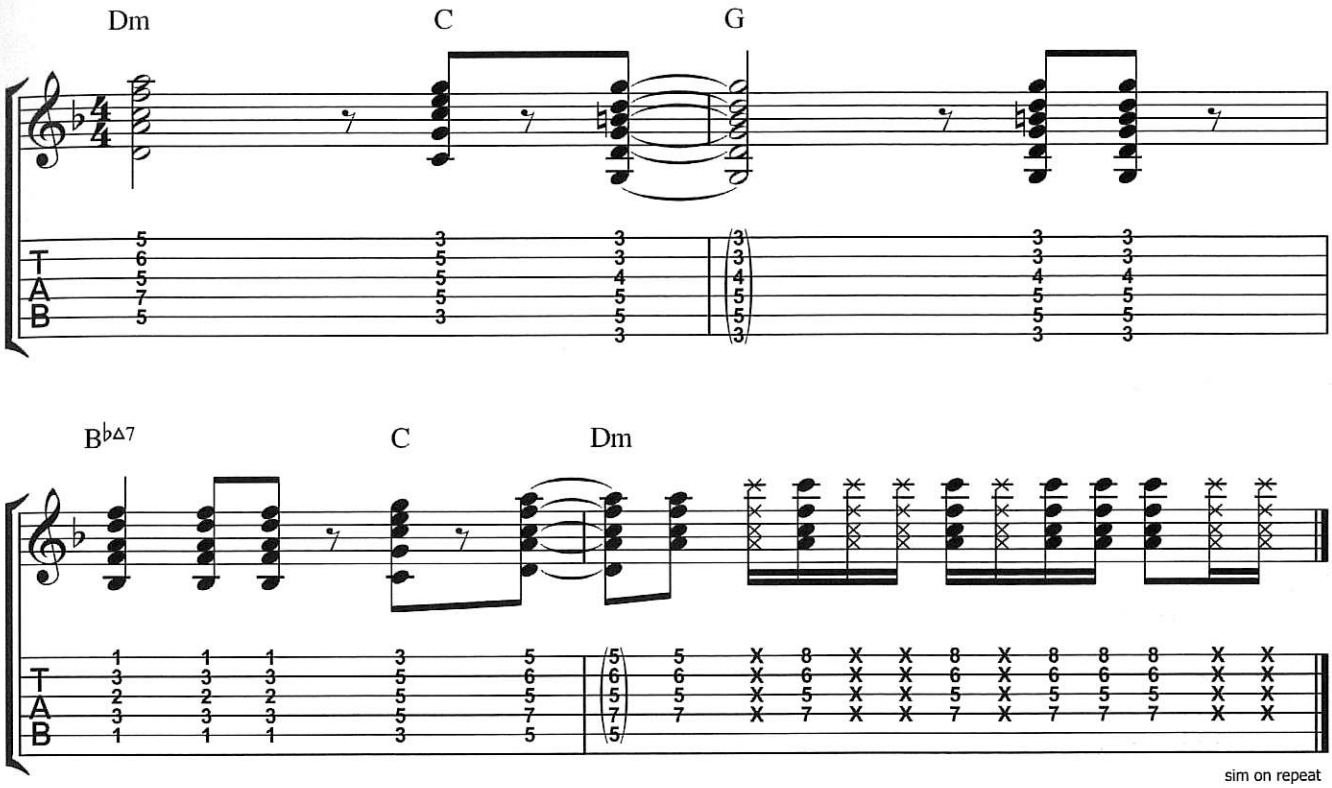
Chorus

As the Intro makes way for the first Chorus, Nile takes the previously simple guitar line and seriously funks it up, adding in sixteenth note rhythms and ghost notes. For the Dm chord he takes his little finger off the D on the G string and moves it to the eighth fret of the top E string to play the high C, the flat seventh. Note how for the $B^{\flat\Delta7}$ chord he ascends the neck and grabs a Dm shape: the notes of the Dm chord (D, F, and A) are also the top three notes in the $B^{\flat\Delta7}$ chord.



Verse

Nile returns to a simple line for the first half of the repeating four-bar Verse section. Notice how the second half of the section is much busier, and contains sixteenth note rhythms and ghost notes.



Chapter 14
Thinking Of You

Artist: Sister Sledge
Album: *We Are Family*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: #11 UK Chart (1984 re-release)

This song was originally recorded on the Sister Sledge album *We Are Family*, and although it was not released as a single at the time, it became a hit in 1984 when it was the third in a series of remixed and reissued tracks from the album. It did best in the UK, hitting #11 in the UK Singles Chart. The song is a fantastic showcase for both Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards, both of whom turned in amazing performances on their respective instruments. This track is also notable for the use of strings in the Breakdown section.

Song Lyrics

According to Nile Rodgers, 'Thinking Of You' was written about the deep friendship between himself and Bernard Edwards, and how they would think of each other while playing and writing.

Everybody let me tell you 'bout my love
Brought to you, by an angel from above
Full equipped, with a lifetime guarantee
Once you try it, I am sure that you'll see

(Without love) There's no reason to live
(Without you) And what would I do with the love I give?
(All my lovin') To you I'll be giving
And I promise, yes I'll do, as long as I'm living

I'm thinking of you and the things you do to me
That makes me love you, now I'm living in ecstasy
Hey, it's you and the things you do to me
That makes me love you, now I'm living in ecstasy

All the time he makes me glad that I'm alive
Together, we will survive
What do you think brought the sun out today
It's my baby, oh, help me sing

(Without love) Without love there's no reason to live
(Without you) Oh what would I do with the love I give?
(All my lovin') To you I'll be giving
And I promise, yes I'll do, as long as I'm living

I'm thinking of you and the things you do to me
That makes me love you, now I'm living in ecstasy
Hey, it's you and the things you do to me
That makes me love you, now I'm living in ecstasy

I'm in love again
And it feels so, so good

Hey, it's you and the things you do to me
That makes me love you, now I'm living in ecstasy
Yeah, it's you and the things you do to me
That makes me love you, now I'm living in ecstasy, oh

It's you and the things you do to me
That makes me love you, now I'm living in ecstasy
Let me tell you 'bout the stars above
That makes me love you
Now I'm living in ecstasy, man I love
It's you, yeah, yeah, yeah
And the things you do to me
(That makes me love you) That makes me love you
Now I'm living in ecstasy

(You and the things you do to me)
Just keep on doin' what you're doin' to me
(That makes me love you)
Eh...hey...
(Now I'm living in ecstasy),
Oh, it's ecstasy
It's you, you, you (You and the things you do to me)
(That makes me love you, now I'm living in ecstasy)

Oh, it's you, you, oh
(You and the things you do to me)
(That makes me love you)
Ooh, ooh, oh
(Now I'm living in ecstasy)

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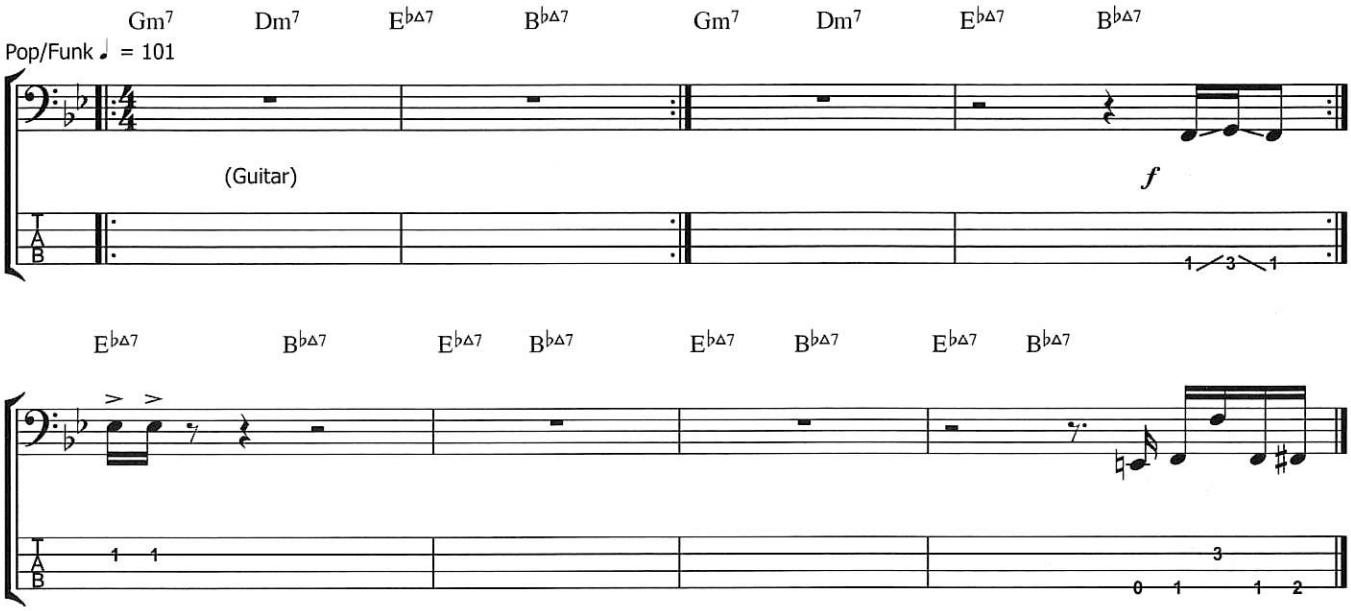
Bass Guitar

'Thinking Of You' features one of Bernard Edward's busiest lines, but when paired with Nile's sixteenth note-based rhythm part it makes for a fantastic groove.

Intro

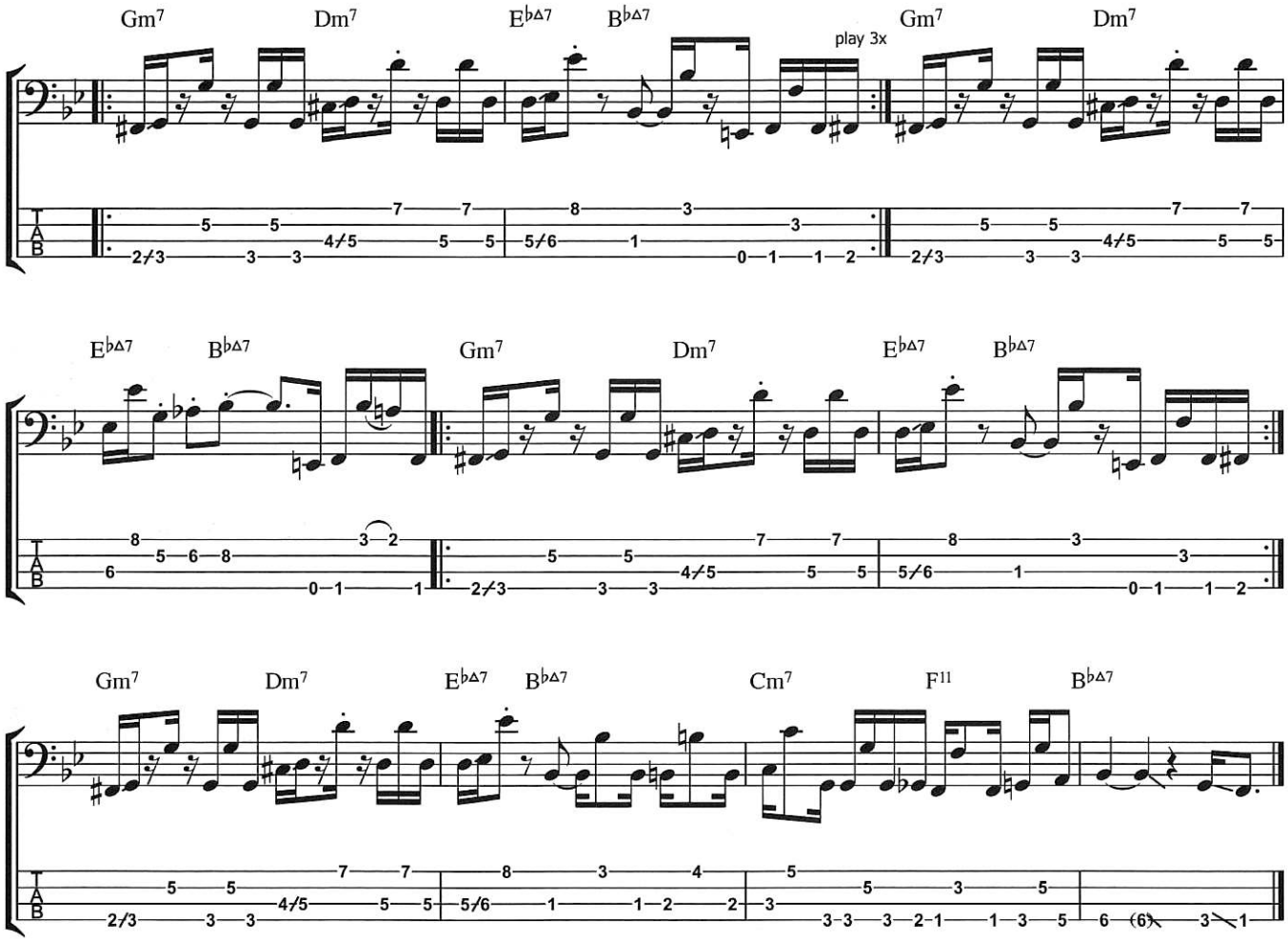
The bass is silent throughout the long, funky guitar intro, entering only briefly for a staccato fill in bars 12 and 13. Strangely for a bassist so in control of the groove, this feel seems badly timed, and the staccato E♭'s sound a little rushed. The bass plays an octave pick-up figure in bar 16 which leads neatly into the Verse pattern.



Chapter 14 - Sister Sledge: Thinking Of You

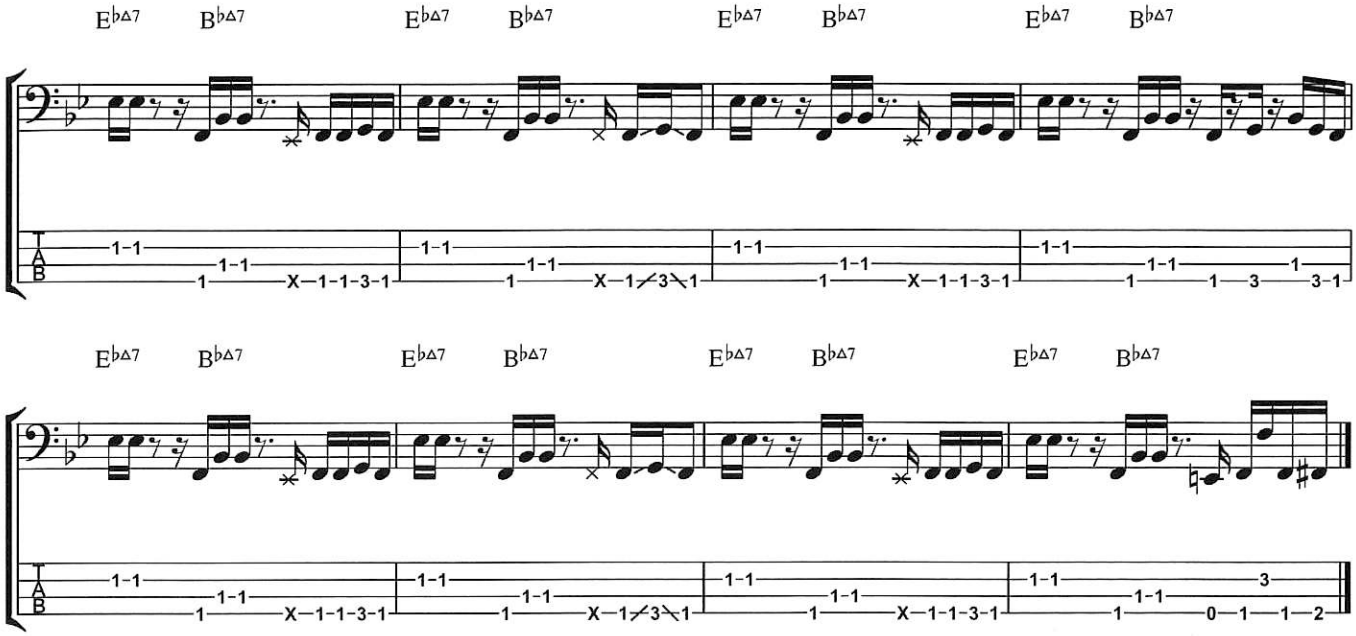
Verse

The bass part during the Verse is a busy line that makes use of glissandos and octaves. As ever, it's Bernard's use of space that really makes this line groove – pay close attention to rests and staccato markings since they really do help with the feel. This is a tough line to play because of all the octave jumping, but this is an important aspect of Bernard's playing and it's well worth taking the time to master this stylistic feature. Bernard punctuates the end of the eight bar section with an ascending fill (in bar 24) which he tops off with a neat pull-off figure on the G string. The second four bar section features different chord changes in the last two bars – a II-V-I progression in B♭. Bernard approaches the Cm^7 chord with chromatic octave figures in bar 30, and plays a finger-twisting turnaround line under the Cm^7 and F chords.



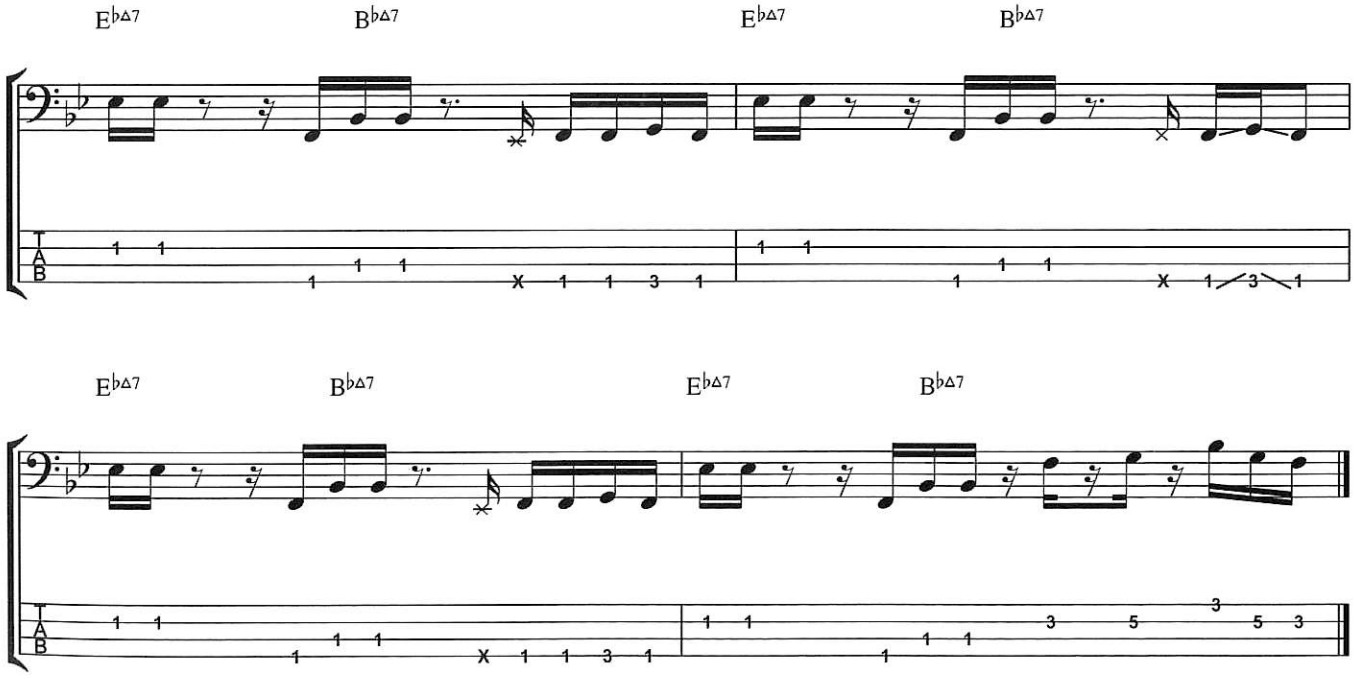
Chorus

The Chorus, in contrast is much simpler and Bernard really makes use of space here. All the bass parts in this section need to be played tight and funky – pluck the strings closer to the Bridge to keep the line nice and tight.



Bass Variation 1

There is very little variation in the bass part throughout this song, but this alternative fill from the final Chorus is worth investigating. You can hear this at CD time 3.50. Notice how Bernard takes the fill in the fourth bar up an octave here.



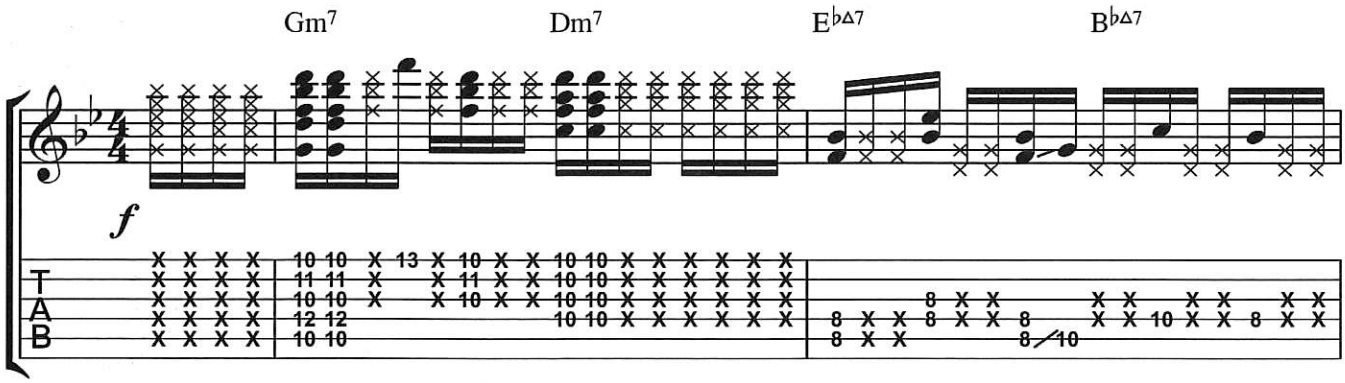
Chapter 14 - Sister Sledge: Thinking Of You

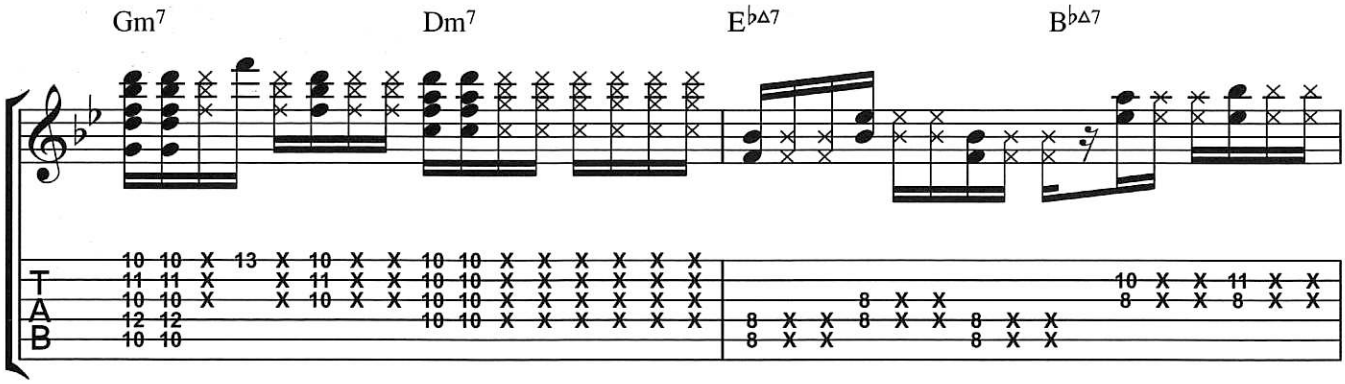
Guitar

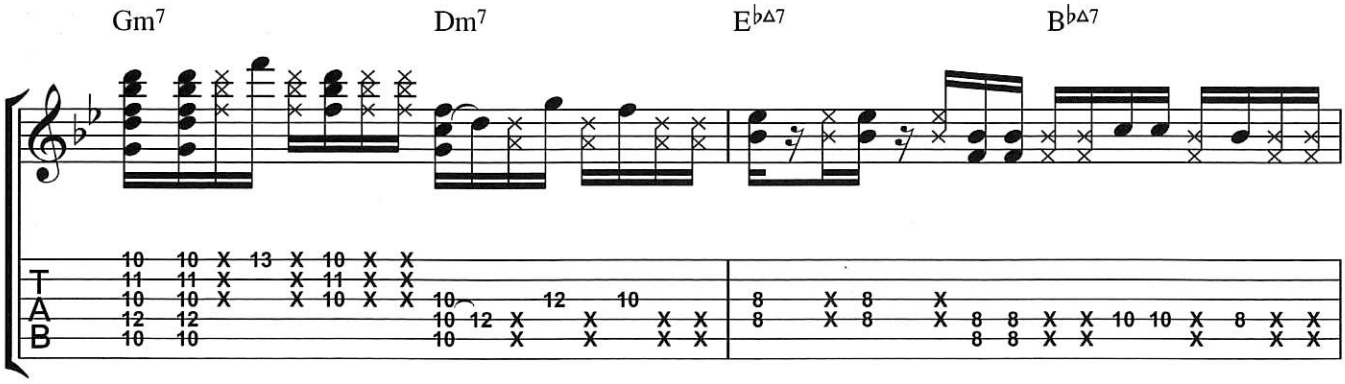
This track really is a tour de force for Nile Rodgers. The opening part of the song showcases Nile's super-funky rhythm playing as he outlines the chord changes for the Verse and Chorus sections, backed only by Sammy Figueroa on percussion, and the Chic Strings.

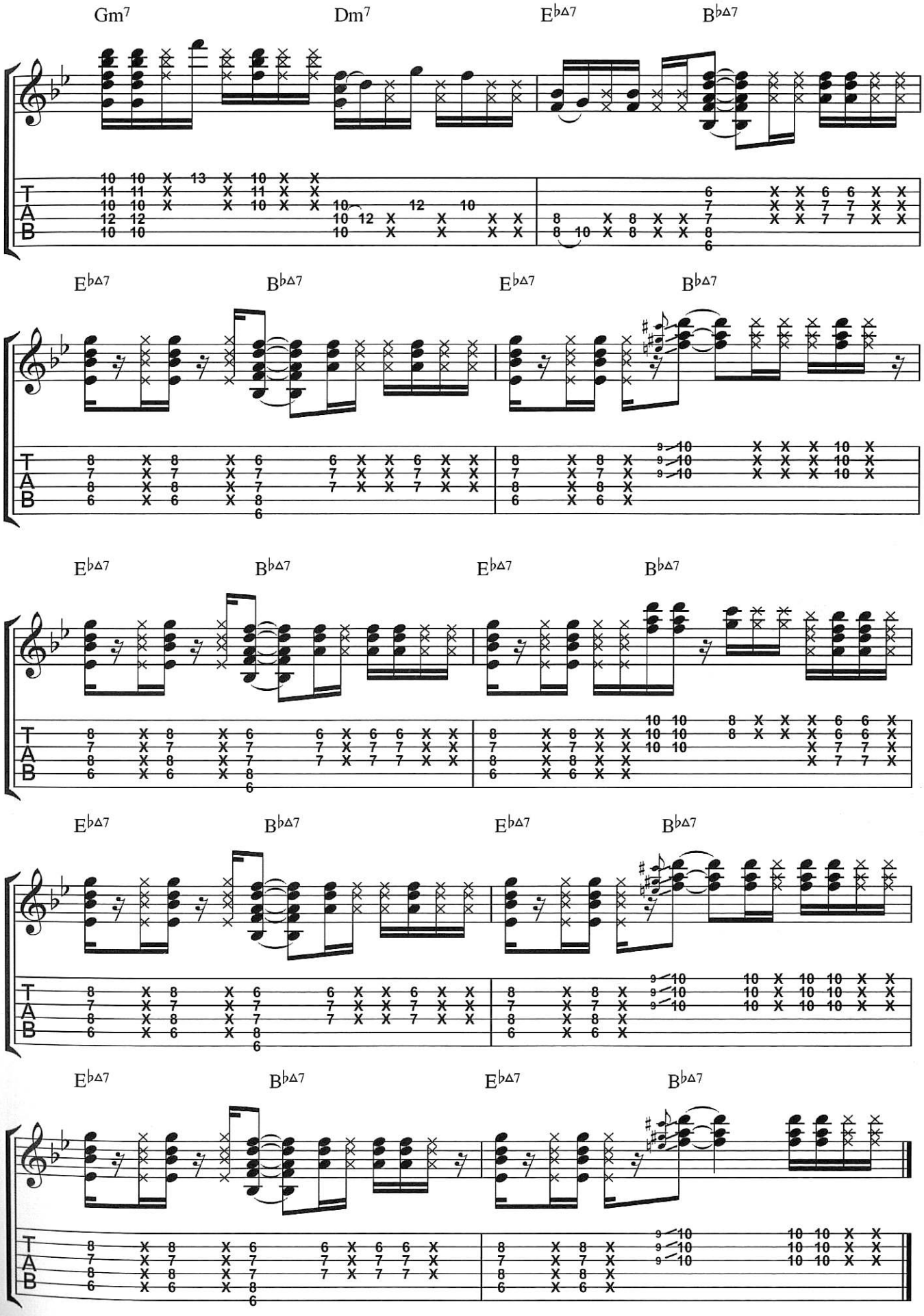
Intro/Breakdown

The song opens with a sixteen bar guitar intro during which Nile plays most of the material that makes up his part for the rest of the song. He begins with the chord progression for the Verse – Gm7, Dm7, $E^{\flat\Delta7}$ and $B^{\flat\Delta7}$ and plays an embellished chordal part with a continuous, stuttering, sixteenth-note feel. Note the use of ghost notes throughout this section to create the sixteenth note feel. I have notated the ghost notes the way it sounds as if they were played but remember that muted notes can really be played anywhere on the neck. In bar 9 the strings enter and Nile plays various voicings of the $E^{\flat\Delta7}$ and $B^{\flat\Delta7}$ chords used in the Chorus. Note his upper register voicing of the $B^{\flat\Delta7}$ in bar 10 – the notes are F, A, and D – the fifth, major seventh and third from the chord. For the Breakdown section Nile essentially plays the entire Intro again. There are one or two small variations here, but none that require transcribing here.





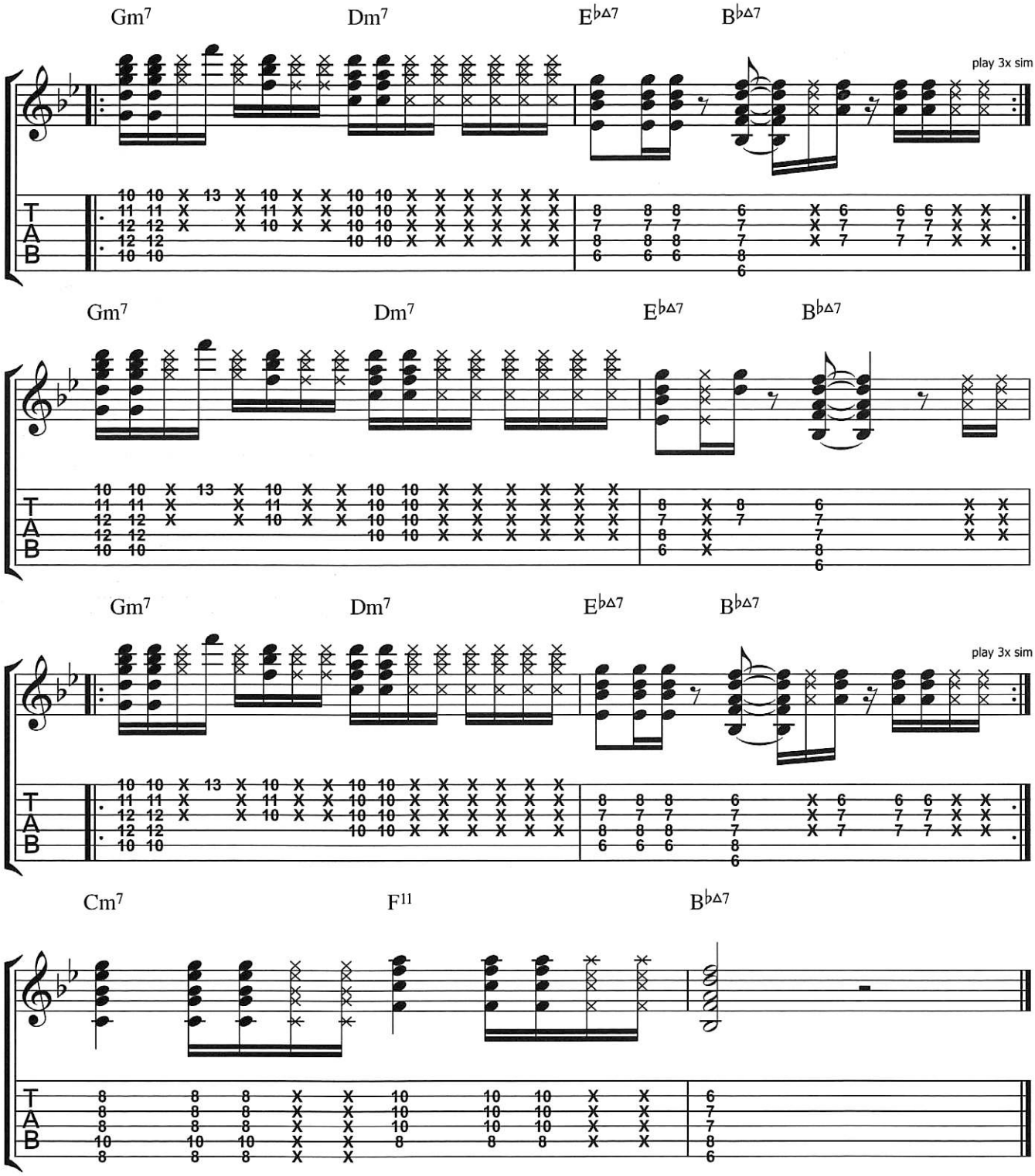



Gm7
Dm7
E♭Δ7
B♭Δ7
E♭Δ7
B♭Δ7
E♭Δ7
B♭Δ7
E♭Δ7
B♭Δ7
E♭Δ7
B♭Δ7
E♭Δ7
B♭Δ7
E♭Δ7
B♭Δ7
T
A
B

Chapter 14 - Sister Sledge: Thinking Of You

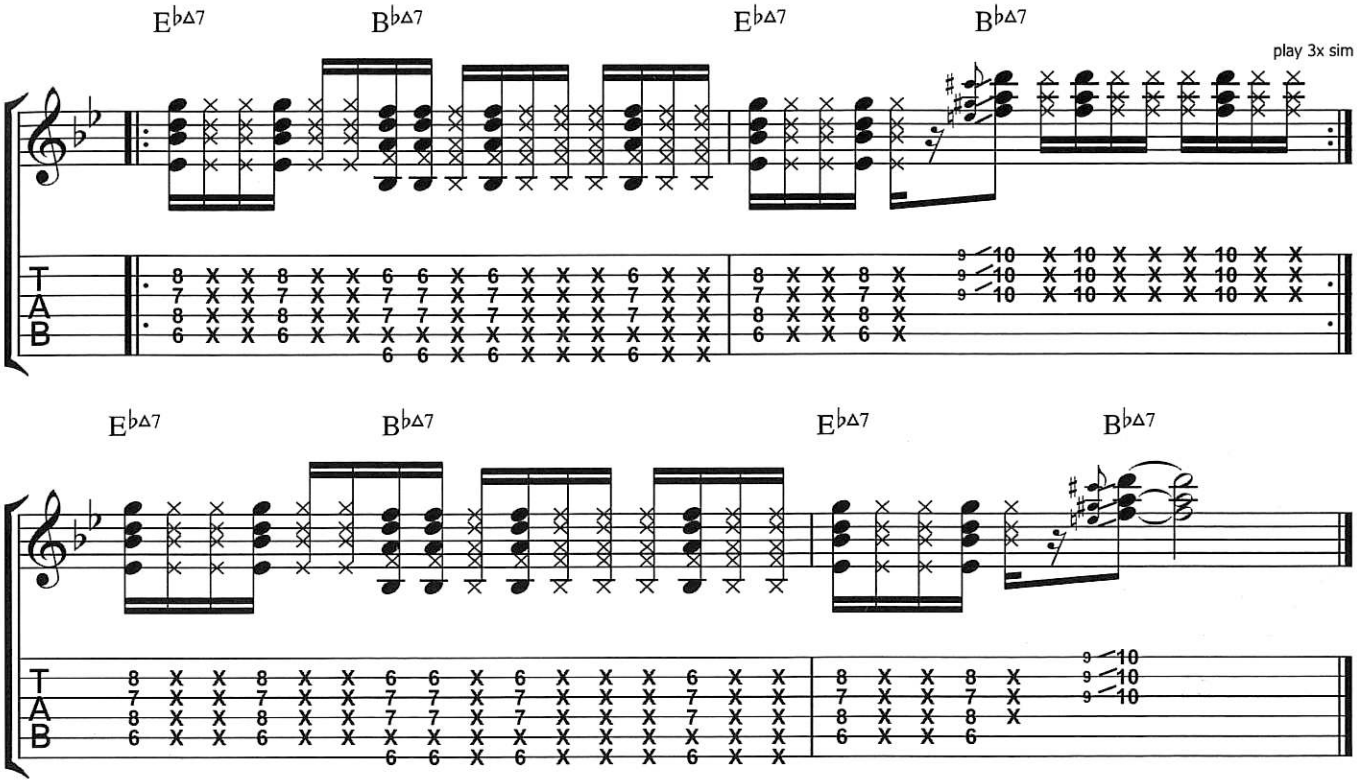
Verse

Once the Verse begins, Nile plays a similar part over the two bar progression. This is used for the majority of the Verse.



Chorus

During the Chorus Nile uses the chord voicings for $E^{\flat\Delta7}$ and $B^{\flat\Delta7}$ that he introduced in the Intro. In the eighth bar of the Chorus he plays an upper register Dm chord – this is actually part of the $B^{\flat\Delta7}$ chord, since it contains D (the third), F (the fifth) and A (the major seventh).



Chapter 15
Pretty Baby

Artist: Sister Sledge
Album: *Love Somebody Today*
Written By: Bernard Edwards and Nile Rodgers
Chart Positions: Non-single

'Pretty Baby' is from *Love Somebody Today*, the second album the group recorded with the Chic Organization. It was the first to be recorded by the organization without the Chic backing singers - this was done to allow the vocals of Sister Sledge to take centre stage. There is certainly a difference in sound between this album and the previous one - the Chic Strings were used more extensively in place of the singers. However, by the time *Love Somebody Today* was released in 1980, disco had begun to outstay it's welcome, and acts such as Chic and Sister Sledge were suffering diminishing sales as a result: the album reached only #64 on the US Pop Charts, and #34 on the UK Pop Chart. Nevertheless, *Love Somebody Today* is a strong album, and 'Pretty Baby' is one of the highlights.

Song Lyrics

This song is written to a daughter, from a mother's perspective.

Pretty Baby
Grew into a lady
The people don't know
What your mama know, they don't
Pretty Baby

In the light of the dawn
A pretty babe was born
Her mother she had sworn to take good care of her
Every night mom would pray
Her life would not be torn
Her clothes would not be worn
Until they dropped off of her
My child, you dear, don't have no fear
I'll shed the tears, keep your head clear
My Pretty Baby

Pretty Baby
Grew into a lady
The people don't know
What your mama know, they don't
Pretty Baby

Little girl I want you to attend the finest schools
And never be a fool
I've got experience
Learn all that you can
You'll find that in the end
You'll learn how to depend on yourself
It makes me glad you have the things I didn't have
Never be sad, my Pretty Baby

Pretty Baby
Grew into a lady
The people don't know
What your mama know, they don't
Pretty Baby
The people don't know
What your mama know, they don't (x4)

Pretty Baby
Grew into a lady
Pretty Baby
Grew into a lady
The people don't know
What your mama know, they don't (x2)

Pretty Baby
Pretty Baby
Grew into a lady
Pretty Baby
Grew into a lady
The people don't know
What your mama know, they don't (x2)

Pretty Baby

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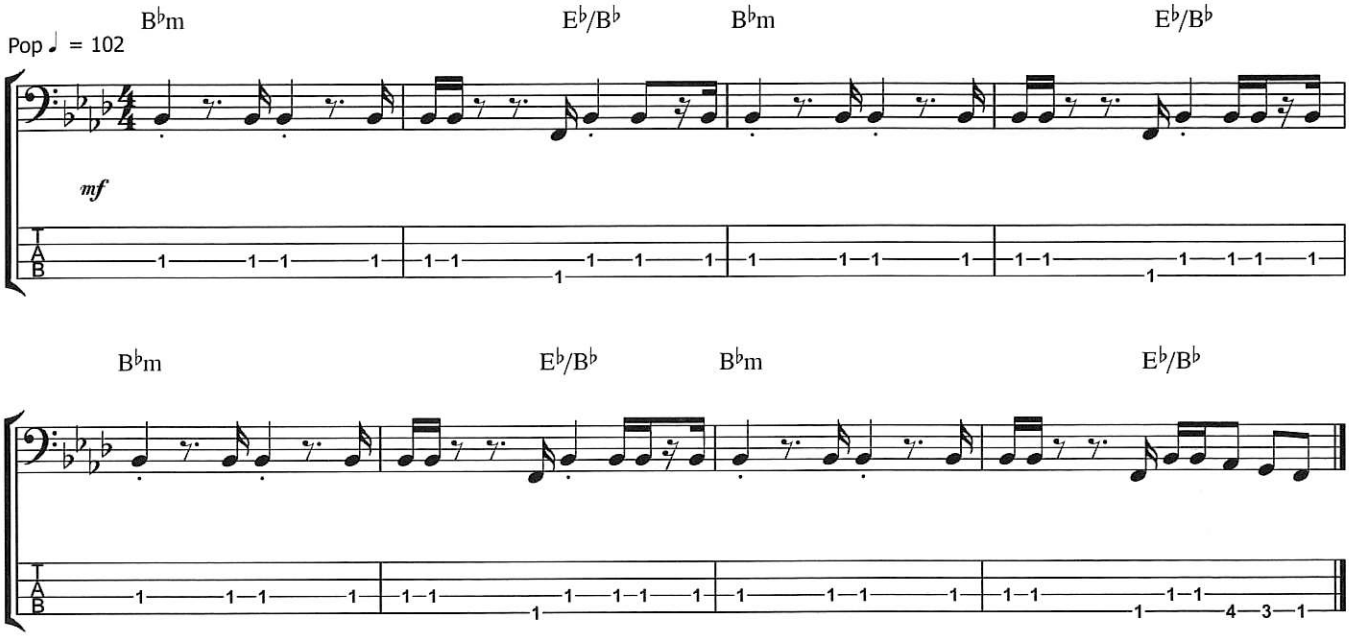
Bass Guitar

This song features one of Bernard's simplest basslines. Throughout the Chorus sections of the track Bernard plays a very simple single note groove. His inimitable, funky style is more in evidence on the Verse sections, but even then his part is simple and he manages to resist the temptation to overplay.

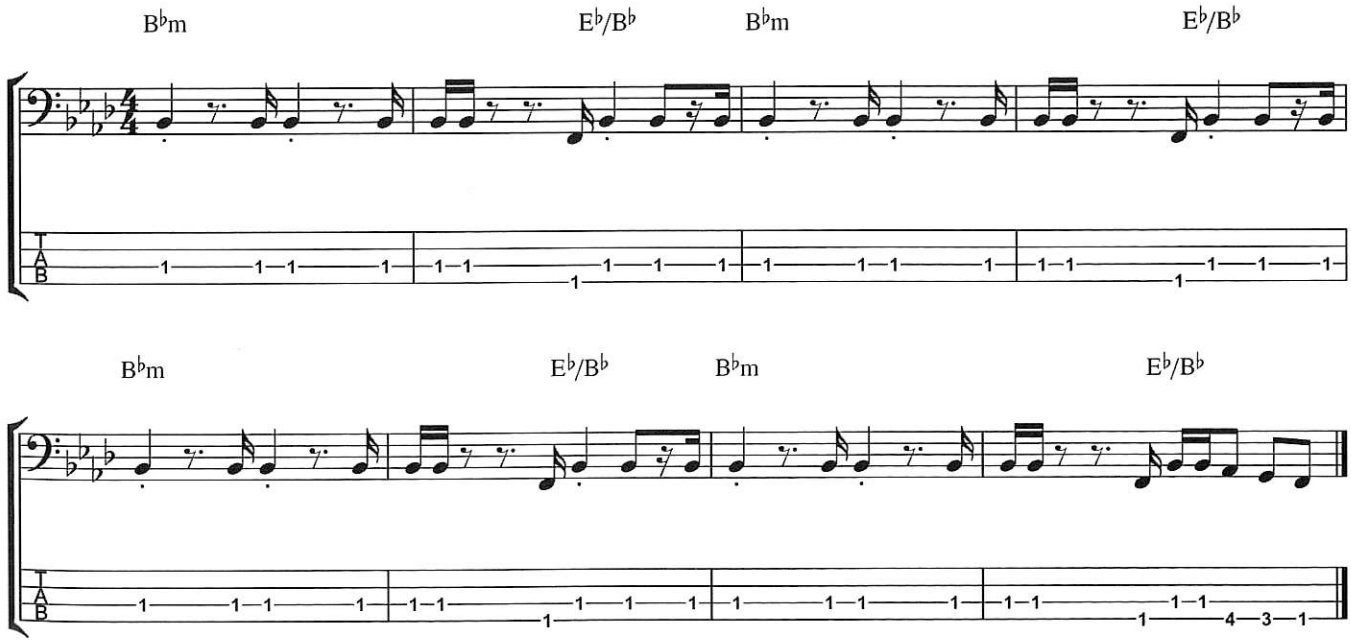
Intro

As you can see from the transcription, Bernard's bass part for the Intro section is very simple indeed. The use of the B♭ as a pedal (the bass note remains the same while the chord changes above it) is very effective. The staccato feel, and sixteenth note anticipations are important to the feel here. Any other bass player would have been tempted to add more fills to this line, but Bernard wisely keeps things simple (as does Nile), allowing the vocals to shine.



Chorus

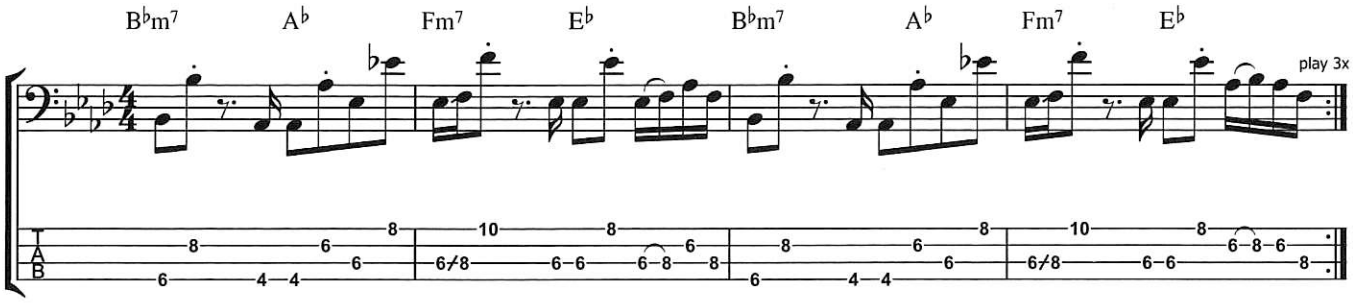
This is a transcription of the first Chorus of the song. You can see that Bernard maintains the simple but effective line that he introduced in the Intro, allowing himself only a few extra notes and decorations. Throughout all the Chorus sections of this song Bernard plays essentially the same line, with little variation.



Chapter 15 - Sister Sledge: Pretty Baby

Verse

This is Bernard's bassline from the Verse sections of this song. As you can see, here he allows himself to play a busier line, filled with octaves, staccato notes and a nice turnaround fill in the second and fourth bars. Rests and staccato notes are crucial to the feel here, so be sure to get them right.

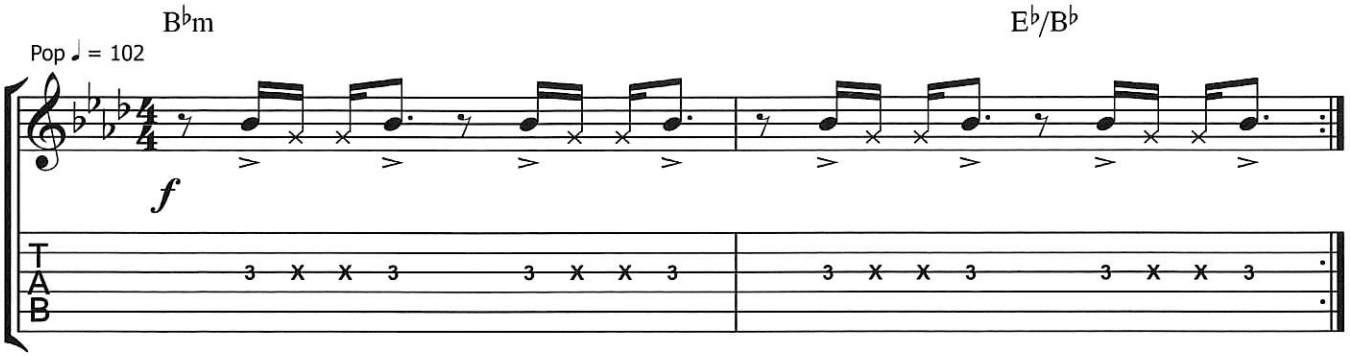


Guitar

Like Bernard, Nile keeps his guitar part very simpe on this song, with little or no variation. The main guitar part (Guitar 1) plays a muted one note figure throughout the song, while the second guitar part (Guitar 2) plays the chords with the piano. Neither part is particularly complex, but both are perfect for the song.

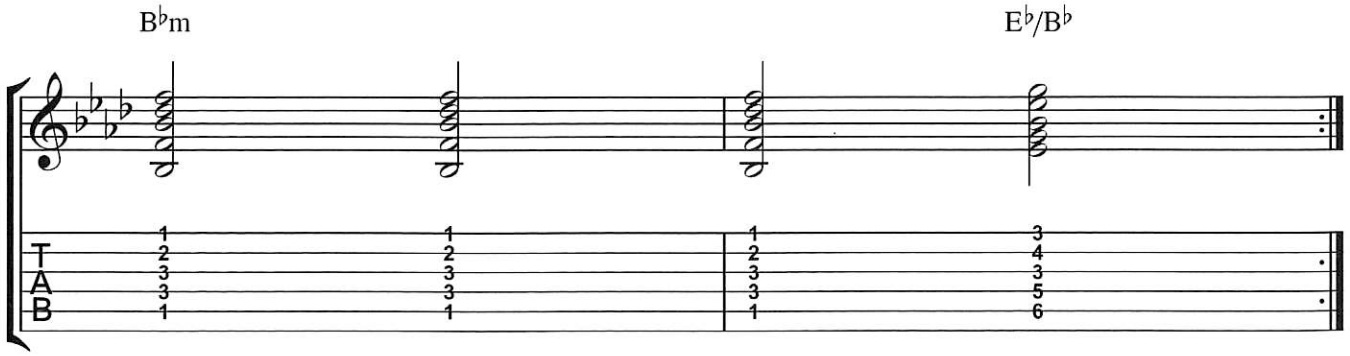
Intro/Chorus

This is Nile's guitar part from the Intro and Chorus sections of this song. As you can see, Nile simply plays a rhythmic figure on a B♭, mirroring the pedal tone idea from Bernard's bassline. Listen closely to the track to hear how Nile articulates this part.



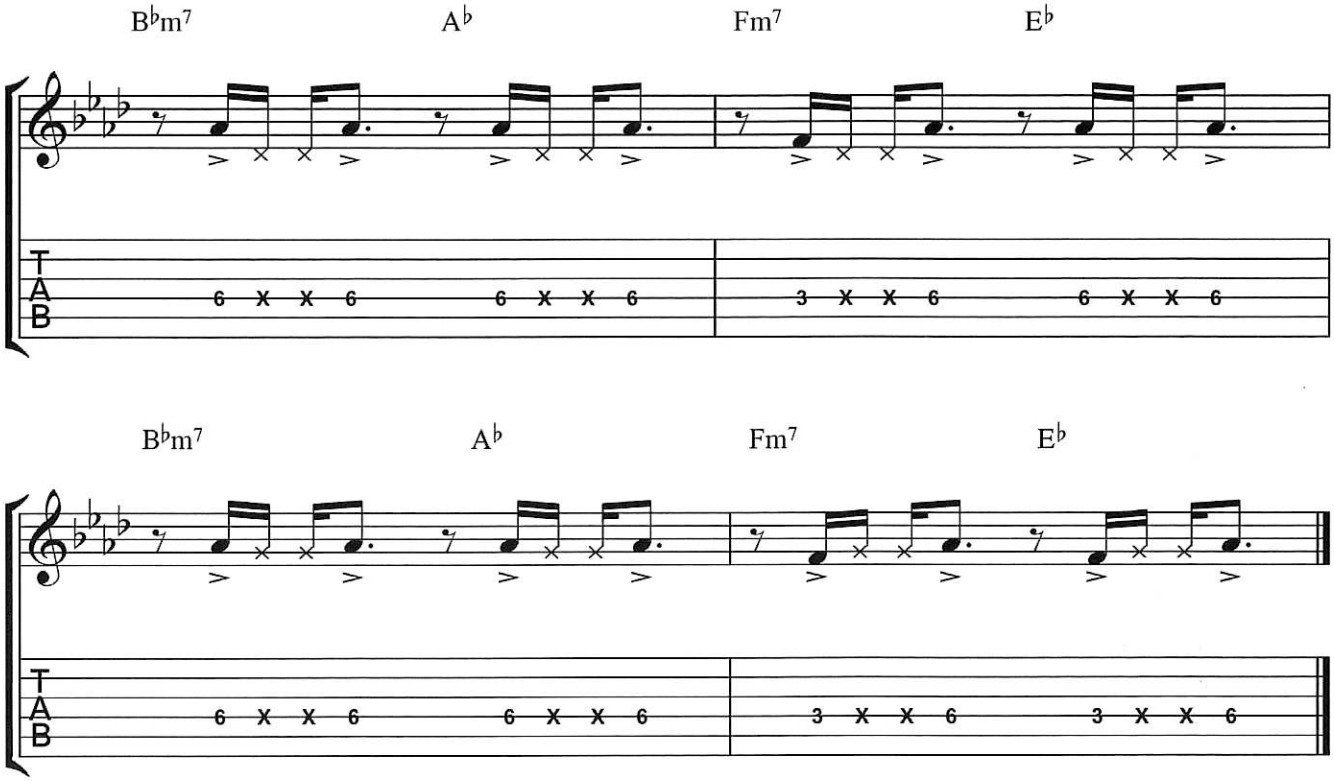
Intro/Chorus (Guitar 2)

This is the second guitar part for the Intro and Chorus sections. This part is quiet in the mix, but is a simple rhythm guitar part supplying the chords, in unison with the piano.



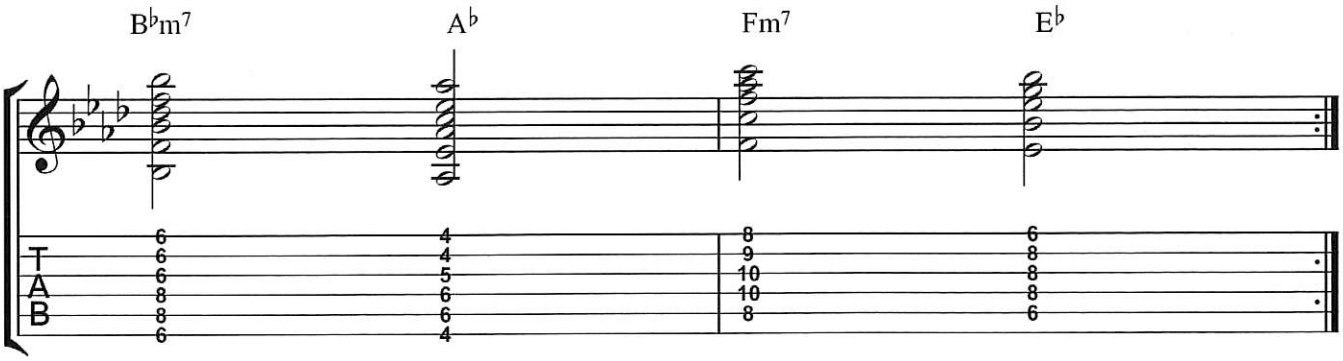
Verse

This is Nile's guitar part from the Verse sections. Here he continues the muted note figure used in the Intro and Chorus, but opts for a different note, A♭. The A♭ serves as the flat seventh in the B♭m7 chord, the root in the A♭ chord, the flat third in the Fm7 chord, and as a non-chord tone in the E♭ chord.



Verse (Guitar 2)

This is the second guitar part, which plays the basic chords in unison with the piano during the Verse sections.



Chapter 16
Good Times

Artist: Chic
Album: *Risqué*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: #5 UK Chart, #1 US Pop Chart, #1 US R&B Chart

'Good Times' is perhaps the best known of Chic's hit singles and originates from the Risqué album. Initially, 'My Feet Feel Like Dancing' was scheduled by Atlantic Records to be the first single from the album, but Edwards and Rodgers both felt so strongly about 'Good Times' that they insisted it be the first single. With its infectious groove, the track was an instant hit in the clubs and remained at #1 on the R&B Chart for six weeks.

'Good Times' has been copied, imitated and sampled on many occasions over the years. The first, and most notable occurrence of this was when rap group The Sugarhill Gang used the song's main riff (without permission) for their ground-breaking song 'Rappers Delight'. Nile Rodgers first heard the track in a New York club, and assumed that the DJ was rapping over the single. He later discovered that the track was by another group, and he and Bernard threatened to sue. They were later awarded half a million dollars in cash, and were given co-writer credits on the song, which sold over 8 million copies, and heralded the beginning of the rap/hip-hop phenomenon. Grandmaster Flash also used the same sampled groove for his hit song 'Adventures of Grandmaster Flash on the Wheels of Steel'. The bass groove from 'Good Times' was also the inspiration behind Queen's #1 hit 'Another One Bites The Dust', and Blondie's 'Rapture'. **(more on page 166)**

'Good Times' is ranked #224 on Rolling Stone Magazine's list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time and remains a hugely popular disco anthem.

Song Lyrics

The lyrics to this song are simple in terms of subject matter – having a good time! Most disco songs were about upbeat topics such as love, dancing etc, and this song is no exception.

Good times, these are the good times
Leave your cares behind, these are the good times
Good times, these are the good times
Our new state of mind, these are the good times

Happy days are here again
The time is right for makin' friends
Let's get together, how 'bout a quarter to ten
Come tomorrow, let's all do it again
Boys will be boys, better let them have their toys
Girls will be girls, cute pony tails and curls
Must put an end to this stress and strife
I think I want to live the sporting life

Good times, these are the good times
Leave your cares behind, these are the good times
Good times, these are the good times
Our new state of mind, these are the good times

A rumour has it that it's getting late
Time marches on, just can't wait
The clock keeps turning, why hesitate
You silly fool, you can't change your fate
Let's cut the rug, a little jive and jitterbug
We want the best, we won't settle for less
Don't be a drag, participate
Clams on the half shell and roller-skates, roller-skates

Good times, these are the good times
Leave your cares behind, these are the good times
Good times, these are the good times
Our new state of mind, these are the good times

Good times, these are the good times
Leave your cares behind, these are the good times
Good times, these are the good times
Our new state of mind, these are the good times

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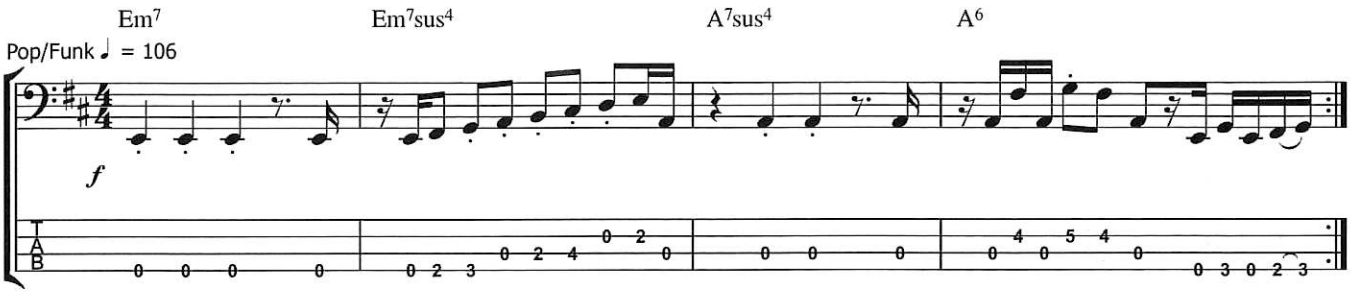
Bass Guitar

The bassline to 'Good Time's is one of the most memorable and infectious bass grooves ever recorded. It inspired many imitations, and continues to be regarded today as one of the all-time greatest bass grooves.

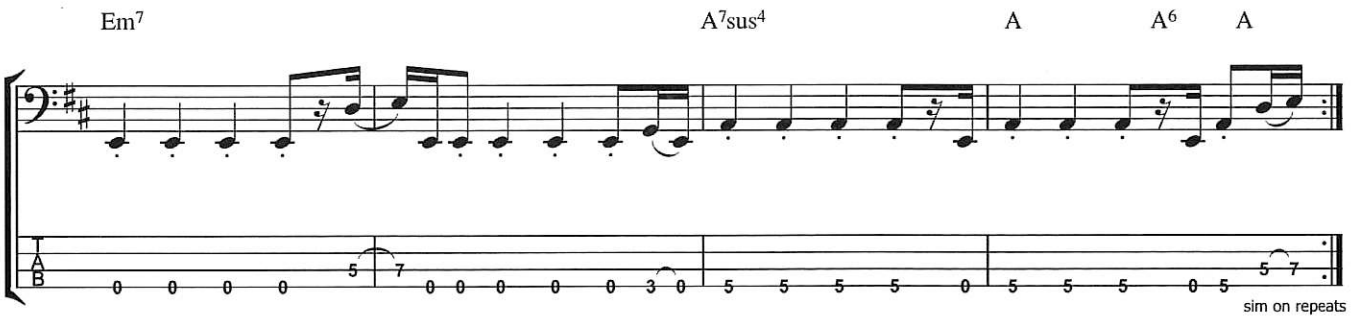
Intro/Chorus

The four bar bass figure that opens the track is used – with little variation – for the majority of the song.
I recommend following the note positions in the TAB here, since the line sounds best if you can keep it as low on the fretboard as possible. Bernard often kept his grooves to within the first five frets of the bass, and this it's important to observe that principle here. Try to keep all the notes short and crisp – you can see that staccato markings have been added to many of the notes in the actual notation – it will help the feel of the line if you can adhere to these. Note that the D major key signature reflects the E Dorian and A Mixolydian tonalities.



Verse

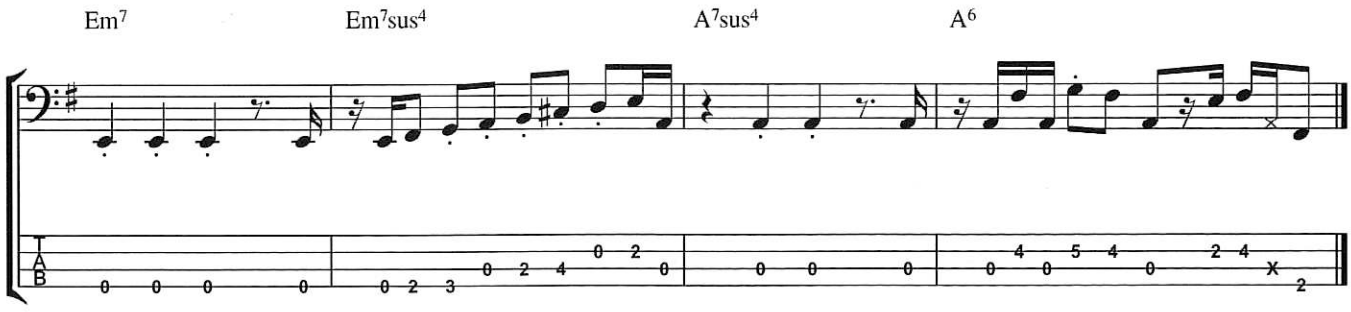
Bernard plays a simplified line for the Verse, but still hitting staccato low E's and A's on each beat. His sixteenth note pickup notes are important to the feel here, as are the rests.



There is very little variation in the bassline to this song, but the following variations are worthy of your attention:

Bass Variation 1

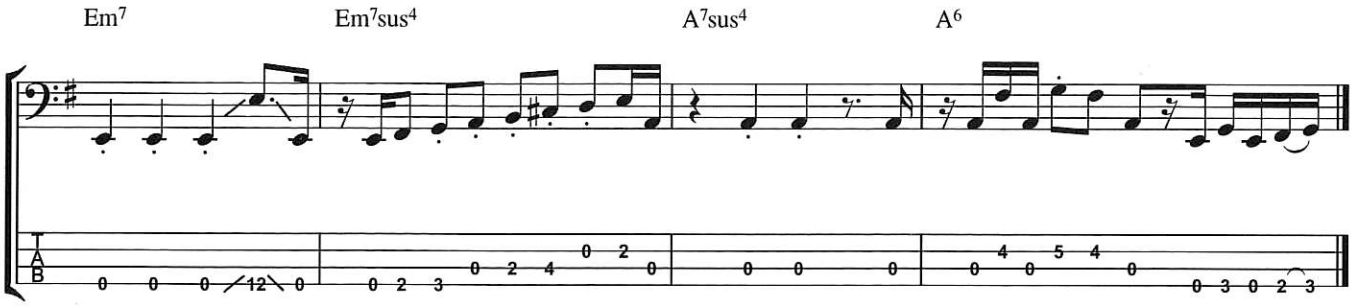
In this variation, Bernard plays an alternative fill in the second half of the fourth bar. You can use a rake from the F♯ on the D string back across the A to the low F♯ on the E string. Make sure the ghost note is a ghost note, and keep all the notes tight and crisp. You can hear Bernard use this variation at CD time 0.27 on the full-length version of this song.



Chapter 16 - Chic: Good Times

Bass Variation 2

In this second variation Bernard adds a simple glissando into the first bar of the groove. You can hear this at CD time 1.45 of the full-length version of this song.

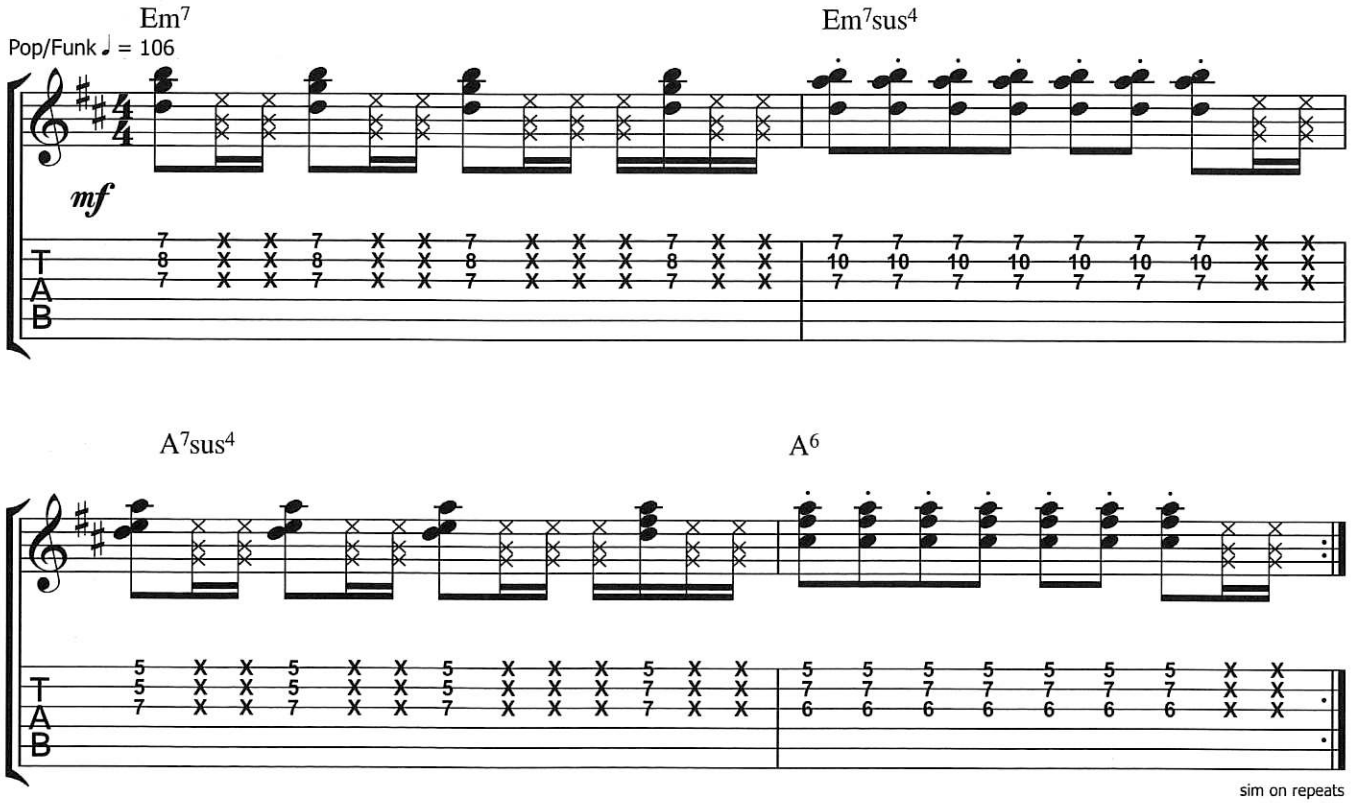


Guitar

Nile Rodgers' guitar part for 'Good Times' is one of his best known rhythm tracks.

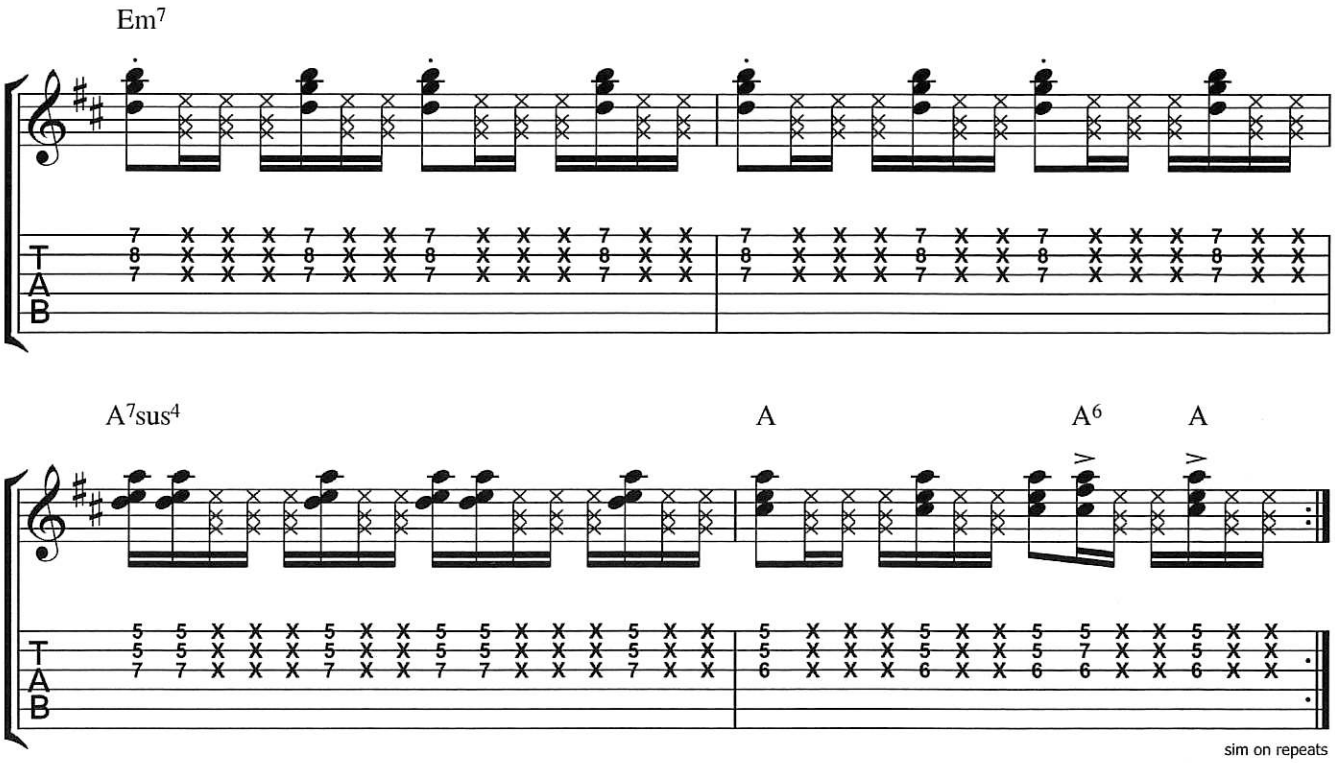
Intro/Chorus/Breakdown

For the main Chorus groove of the song, Nile alternates between sixteenth note muted rhythms in the first and third bars, and staccato eighth notes in the second and fourth bars. This alternation gives the part significantly more interest than it would have if either feel were used exclusively throughout the groove. Notice that Nile doesn't always include the root note in his chord voicings – this is commonplace with this kind of funk guitar playing, especially since the bass provides a strong root note throughout the line.



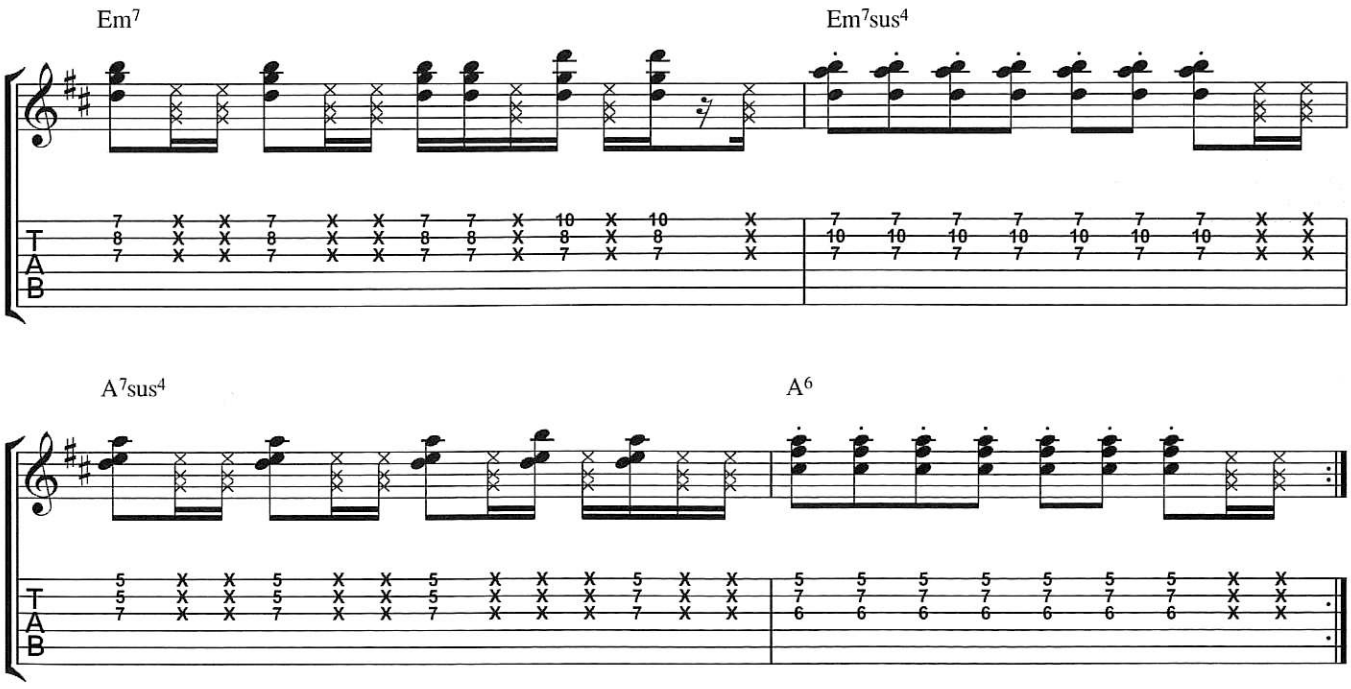
Verse

For the Verse Nile maintains a sixteenth note based groove that makes extensive use of muted notes. The rhythmic figure introduced on the first two beats of the first bar of the Verse is the most important to master since the rest of the part is derived from this. The accented second semiquaver of the second and fourth beats add to the funk flavour.



Guitar Variation 1

There is very little variation in the guitar part throughout this song aside from the following slight variation which can be heard in the breakdown section at CD time 5.40.



Chapter 17
My Feet Keep Dancing

Artist: Chic
Album: *Risqué*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: #21 UK Chart, #42 US Pop Chart, #101 US R&B Chart

'My Feet Keep Dancing' is from the Chic album *Risqué*, and is a celebration of dancing - so much so in fact that the 'solo' is a tap dancing solo! An adventurous (if not slightly monotonous) song, from an adventurous album, 'My Feet Keep Dancing' is a tribute to the dance legends of Vaudeville. Nile Rodgers explained to Daryl Easlea (in his excellent book *Everybody Dance: Chic & The Politics of Disco*): *'We were saying "thank you" to the aristocrats in the ghetto. Their form of dancing was Lindy-hopping and tapping. Well, you couldn't see Lindy-hopping, but you could hear tapping. We thought no one would know why we did it, but we didn't care. If you do art properly - the fallout will be good sales. People don't need to know why they like it, they just do.'*

Despite this, the track was only able to reach #21 in the UK Charts when released in December 1979. It fared worse in the US, reaching only #42 on the R&B Charts, and #101 on the US Pop Charts. It is however one of the best showcases for Bernard Edwards' bubbling, funky fingerstyle grooves. Filled with percussive ghost notes, his groove during the Verse and tap dancing sections makes for one of the high points in this book. When paired with the staccato insistence of the Chorus sections, it makes for a highly inventive part that anchors the song, allowing the lyrics, themselves a celebration of dancing, to shine. Harmonically, the song is more complex than the standard pop fare: the use of eleventh chords adds a 'yearning' quality to the Chorus sections, while the simplicity of the Verse keeps the focus on both the bass and the vocal.

Song Lyrics

'My Feet Keep Dancing' is an ambitious song, one that is truely a celebration of the act of dancing. The deceptively intelligent lyrics also reveal the band's underlying sophistication.

Dancing, dancing
My feet keep dancing, dancing, dancing
My feet keep dancing, dancing
My feet keep dancing, dancing, dancing

I need some help, I get beside myself
And I got so many things in life to do
Like, reach for a star
Or maybe shoot ten under par
I'd like to do it all before I'm through
Fly into space or maybe save the human race
All these things seem so appealing
But I'll never get the chance
Cause all I do is dance
My mama said my brains are in my feet

Dancing, dancing
My feet keep dancing, dancing, dancing
My feet keep dancing, dancing
My feet keep dancing, dancing, dancing (x2)

Papa told me
Every night when he would scold me
He knew I'd never make him very proud
So I ran away from home to live all alone
And make myself a standout in the crowd
Then it hit, my ideas began to fit
I had to be what I was meant to be
Now my name is up in lights
And I hoof here every night
They were right, my brains are in my feet

Dancing, dancing
My feet keep dancing, dancing, dancing
My feet keep dancing, dancing
My feet keep dancing, dancing, dancing

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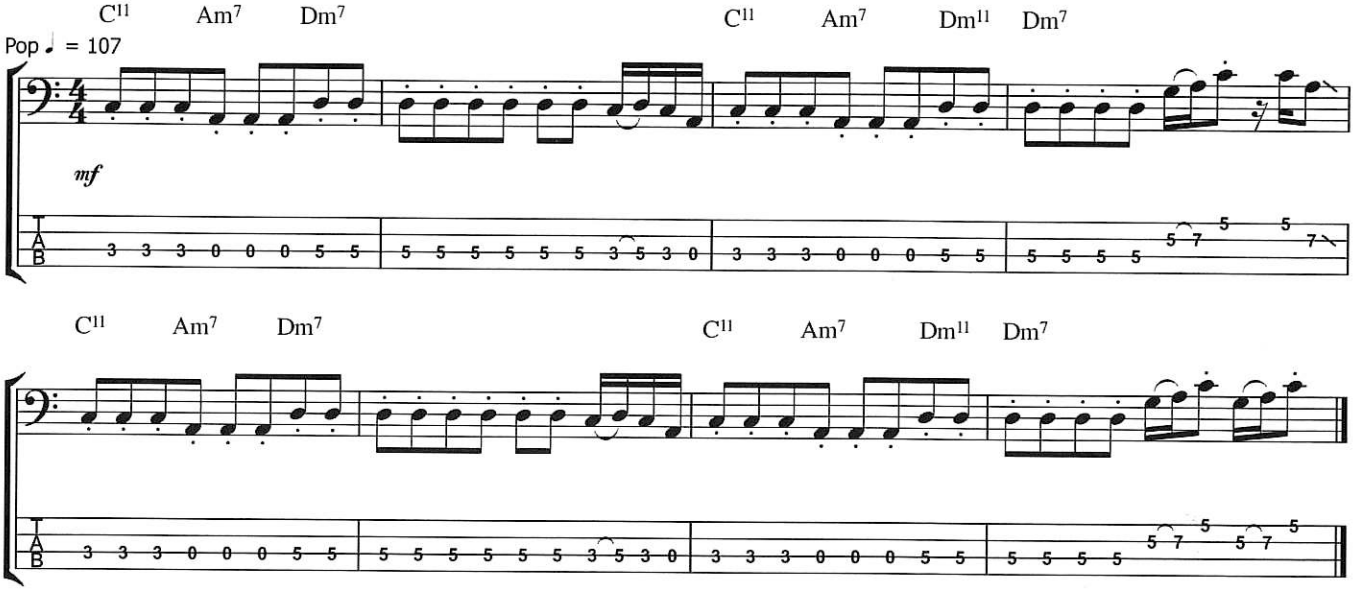
Bass Guitar

This track is a real showcase for Bernard. While he keeps his part very simple during the Intro and Chorus sections (mirroring the piano and guitar's insistent staccato figure), he truly shines during the Verse and tap dancing sections, where he lays down a syncopated and busy funk groove.

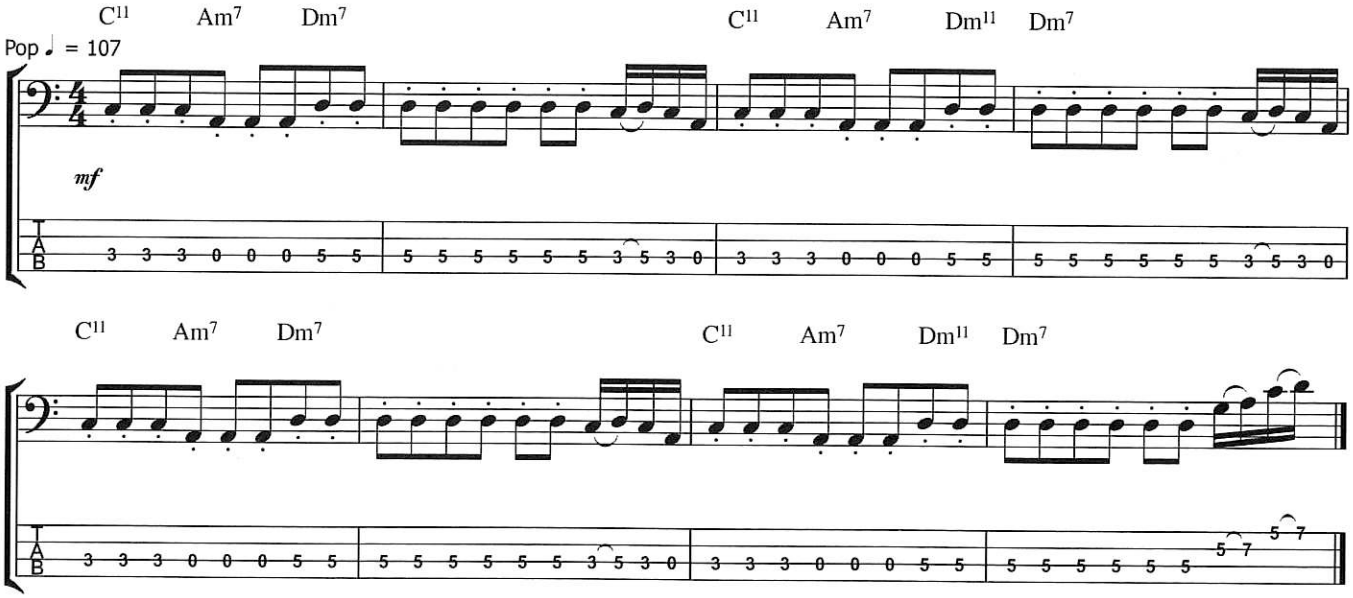
Intro

During the Intro Bernard plays a staccato root note line that follows the chord progression. The end of each four bar figure is punctuated by a fill. The example below is the first eight bars of the song, leading to the first Chorus.



Chorus

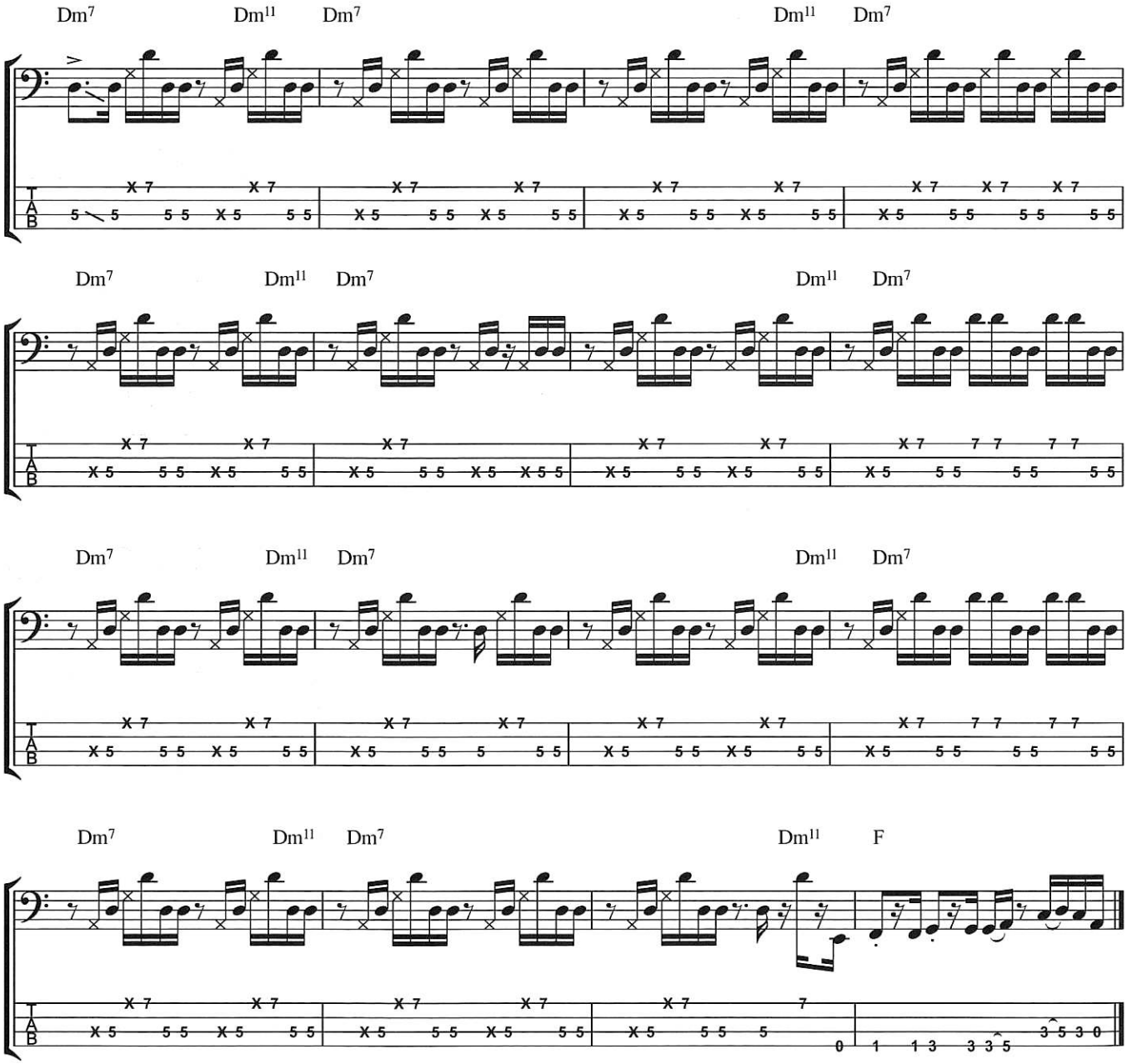
For the Chorus, Bernard continues the same line as used in the Intro. The fill used in the eighth bar really establishes the Dm tonality used for the Verse, and makes the transistion smooth.



Chapter 17 - Chic: My Feet Keep Dancing

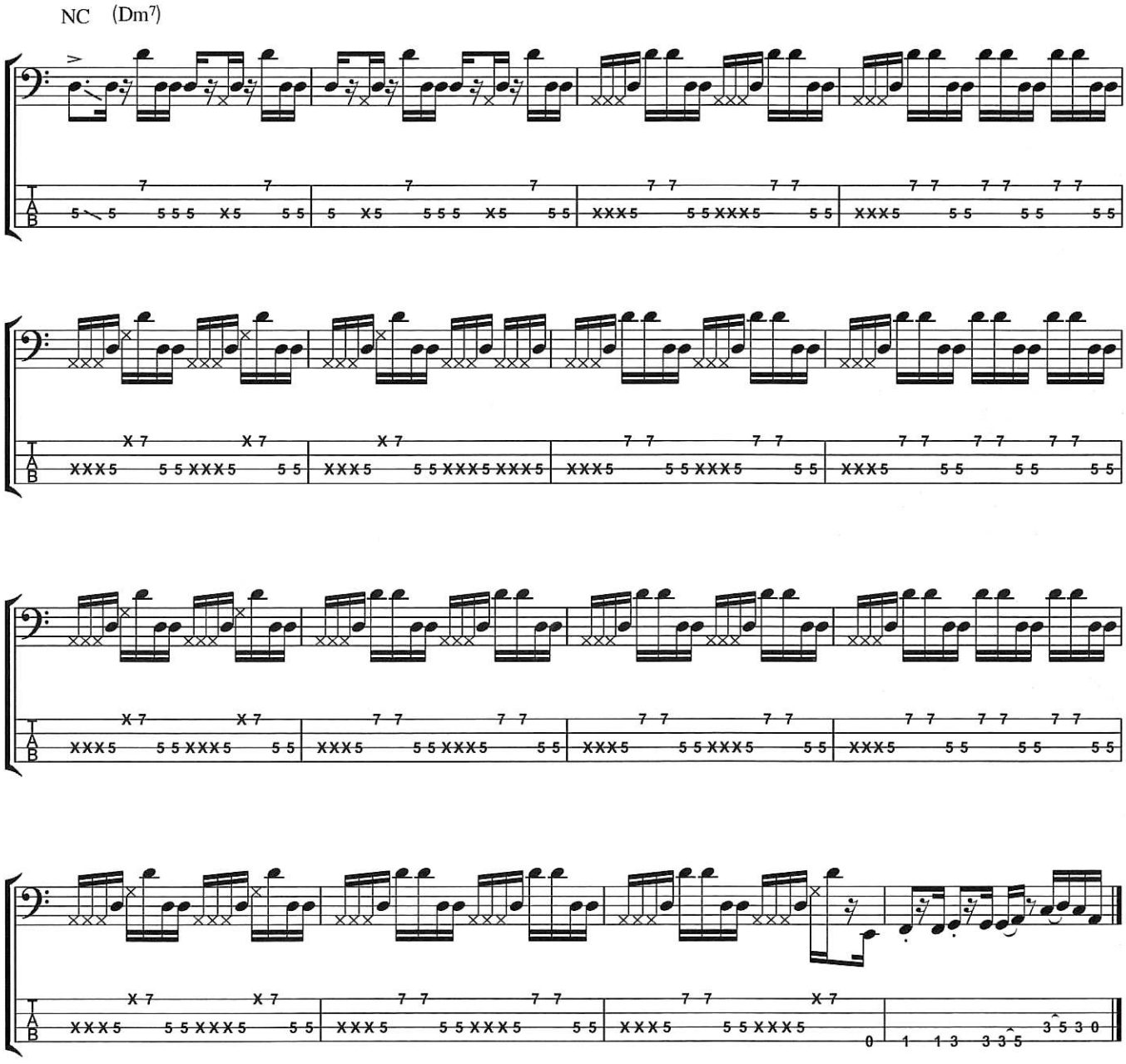
Verse

Bernard plays a root-octave groove during the Verse, but it's one that is littered with syncopation and ghost notes, making it a very difficult line to play accurately. The trick to mastering the line lies in the ghost note on the G string before the high D's: playing this ghost note (which must be on the G string) makes the string crossing a lot easier. Alternating between pitched notes and ghost notes can also be tricky, and you should work on this line at a slow tempo before attempting to bring it up to speed. Note the difference in bars 4 and 8 in terms of the use of ghost notes: bar 4 uses ghost notes before every high D, bar 8 only uses one, then alternates between pitched octave D's and pitched root D's - this is trickier than it looks to pull off. The groove ends with a fill over the F chord in the final bar that leads the song neatly back to C for the Chorus.



Tap Dancing Section

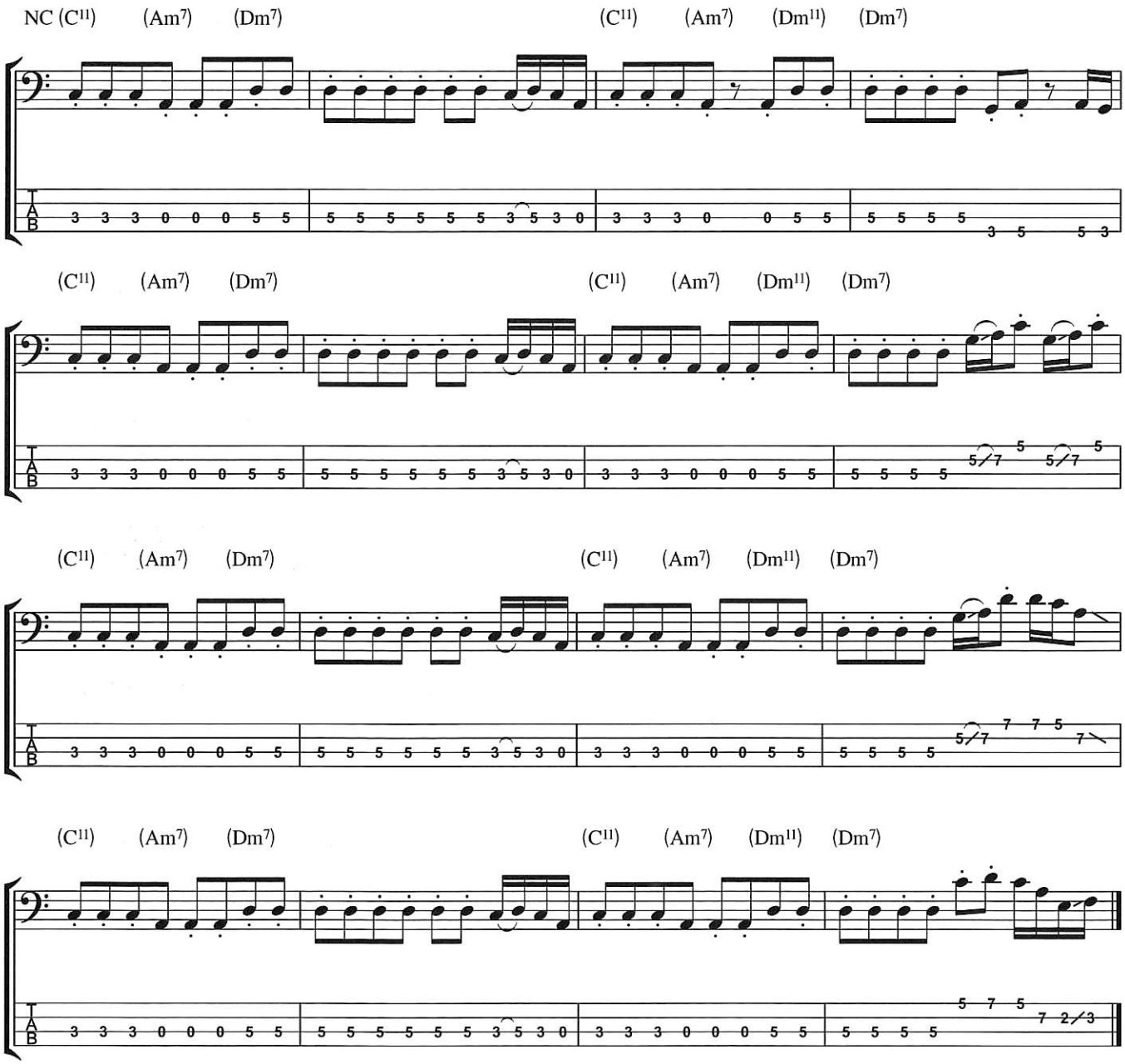
Bernard complicates the Verse bassline somewhat for the tap dancing section. As you can see, he adds in a lot of extra ghost notes, making the line a continuous sixteenth note groove. This is very difficult to perform using standard fingerstyle technique, yet I believe this is what Bernard used. While his unconventional picking technique would appear to be an option here, the fact that the line is situated on the A string (and with the E string therefore in the way), and taking into account the cleanness with which it is played, leads me to believe that standard fingerstyle was used. On the recording you can hear that sometimes his ghost notes are on the verge of becoming harmonics.



Chapter 17 - Chic: My Feet Keep Dancing

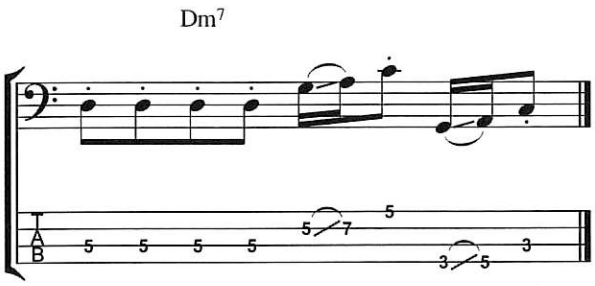
Strings Section

During the Strings Section (which follows the tap dancing section at CD time 4.08), Bernard repeats his line from the Chorus. However, you should note the presence of some notes which are not played with staccato - for example the last eighth note in bar 1. There are several other examples throughout. There are some great fills to investigate here as well, all occurring in the fourth bar of the repeating sequence. This is a transcription of the first sixteen bars of the section. There is a lot of repetition after this.



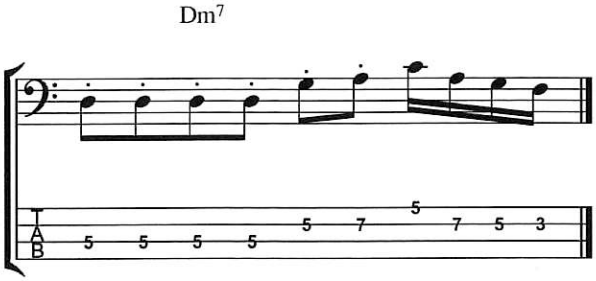
Bass Variation 1

This variation occurs during the Strings Section, at CD time 4.51. Here Bernard plays a simple fill on the D and G strings, then repeats it an octave lower on the E and A strings. Simple, but effective.



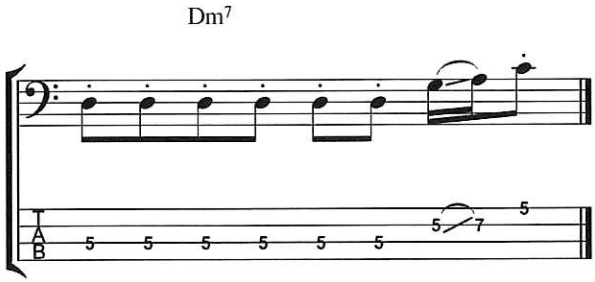
Bass Variation 2

This variation also occurs during the Strings Section, this time at CD time 4.59. Bernard plays a staccato G and A, then ends with a descending minor pentatonic line.



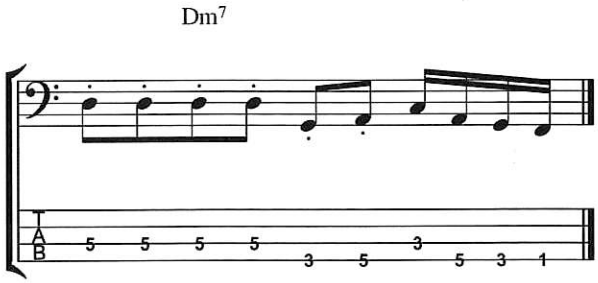
Bass Variation 3

This variation can be heard during the Chorus, at CD time 2.47.



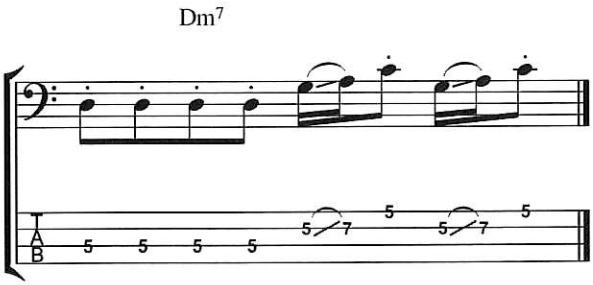
Bass Variation 4

This Chorus variation can be heard shortly after the previous fill...



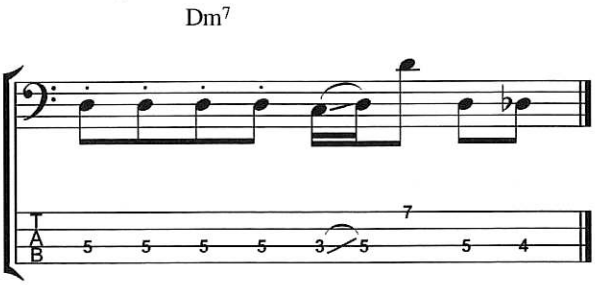
Bass Variation 5

This one also occurs during the Chorus, at CD time 5.17.



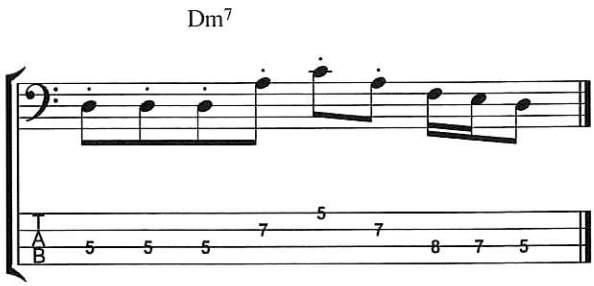
Bass Variation 6

This fill occurs during the last Chorus, at CD time 5.26.



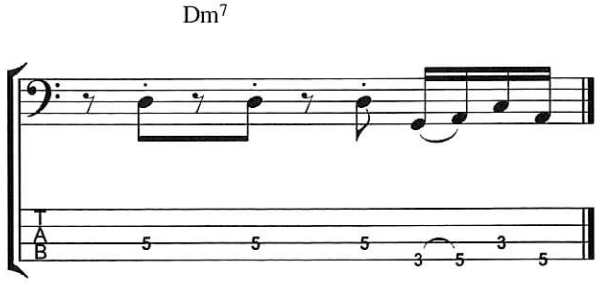
Bass Variation 7

This one is also from the last Chorus, at CD time 5.52.



Bass Variation 8

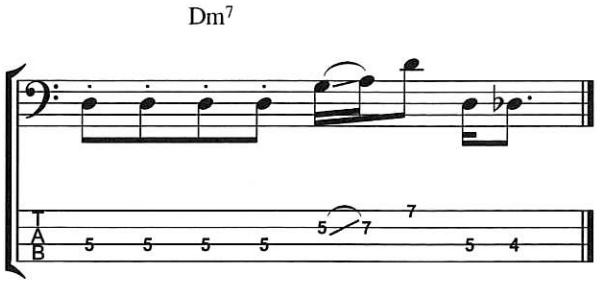
From the last Chorus, at CD time 6.01...



Chapter 17 - Chic: My Feet Keep Dancing

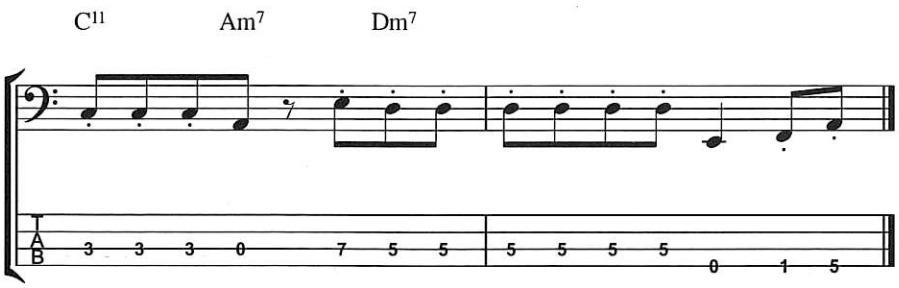
Bass Variation 9

This variation also occurs during the Strings Section, this time at CD time 6.10. Bernard uses a chromatic passing note (the D♭) to get back to C.



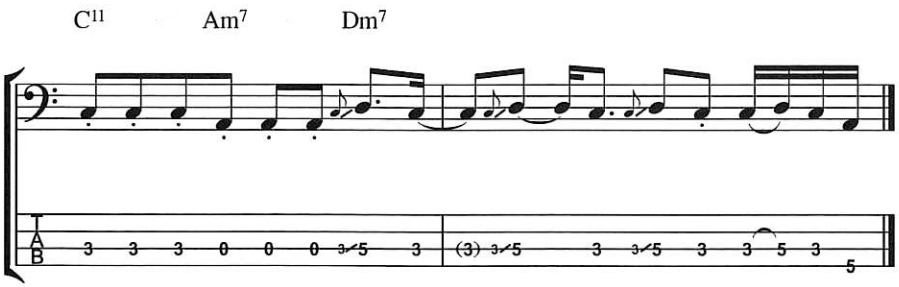
Bass Variation 10

This variation occurs during the last Chorus, at CD time 6.16. Bernard drops an eighth note, moves up to the fifth of the Am chord (the E), and uses it to drop down onto the D. He then drops to low E in the second bar and ascends again using chord tones from the Dm7 chord (F and A, the flat third and fifth respectively).



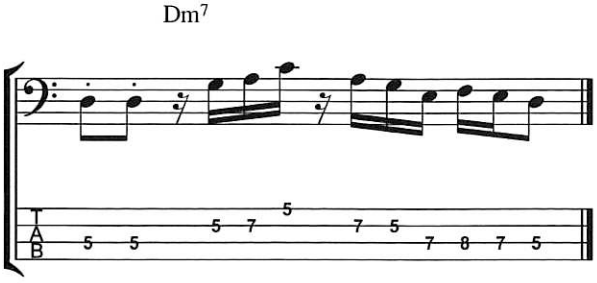
Bass Variation 11

This fill can be heard at CD time 6.25. Here Bernard mirrors the vocal line with his bass part.



Bass Variation 12

This is a tricky D minor fill that can be heard at CD time 6.31.

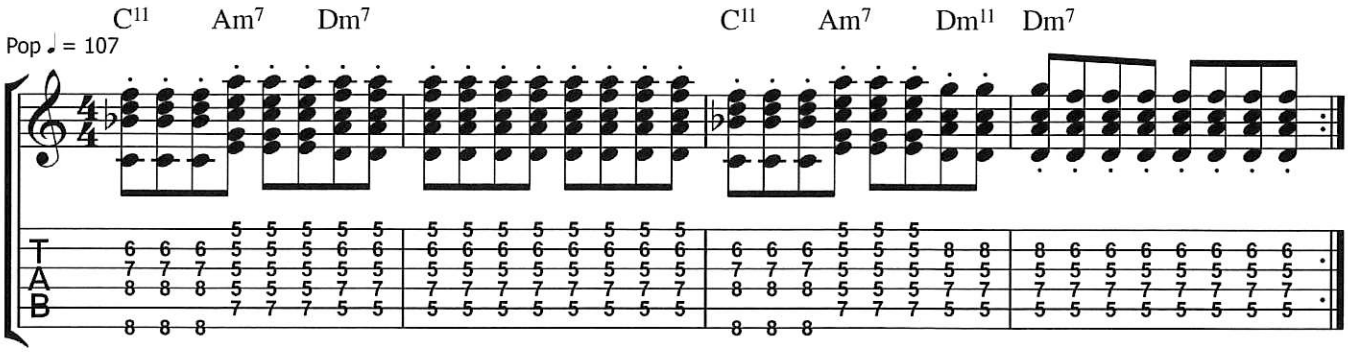


Guitar

Nile takes a back seat on this song, playing a very simple part throughout.

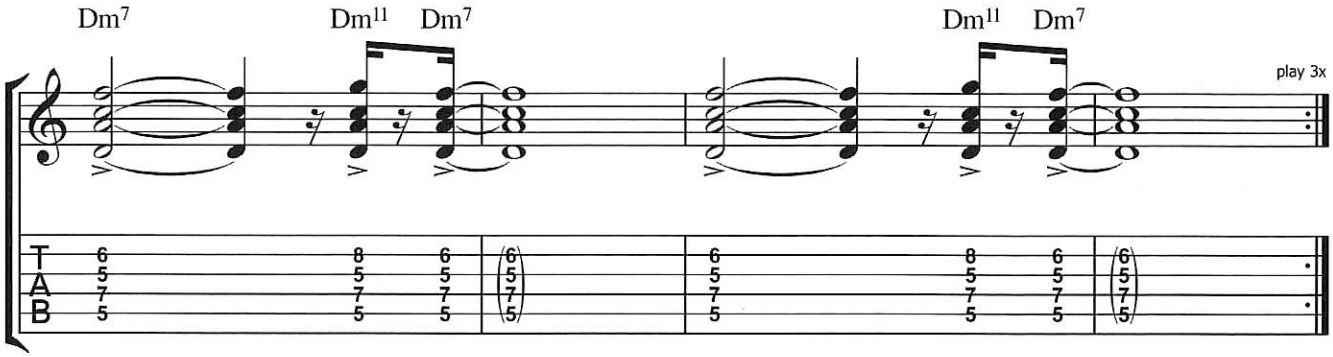
Intro/Chorus

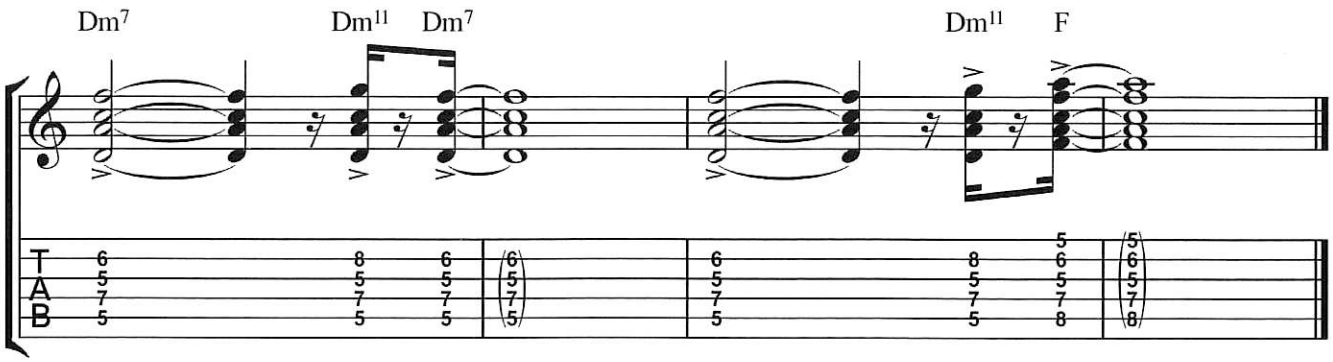
Nile plays a staccato part during the Intro and Chorus sections.



Verse

During the Verse Nile plays a part that is a total contrast to the Chorus: it's very legato, and makes use of plenty of space. Note the use of another eleventh chord, here just used as a rhythmic decoration.





Chapter 18
My Forbidden Lover

Artist: Chic
Album: *Risqué*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: #15 UK Chart, #43 US Pop Chart, #33 US R&B Chart

'My Forbidden Lover' is one of the best tracks from the *Risqué* album, and features some fantastic playing from both Nile and Bernard. It is also a great example of how sophisticated their writing style could be: the harmonic progression used for the Chorus reveals their jazz influences, while the Verse section showcases their groove playing. It was released as a single in October of 1979, but was unable to match the enormous success of the previous single, 'Good Times'. Aside from some fantastic playing by the band, the song features great lyrics and a memorable refrain chanted in an almost nursury rhyme style towards the end of the track: 'My love is forbidden, we keep our love hidden'.

Song Lyrics

The lyrics are vague, but Nile has often been quoted as saying that they apply to any relationship that used to be considered 'improper', be it between interracial couples, gay couples, or any other pairing outside of conventional boundaries.

My forbidden lover
I don't want no other
My forbidden lover
I don't want no other

I fell in love
And I didn't want to do it cause I knew
That your love wasn't true
You try to hide that sinister appearance
And the lies, those alibies
You give your love to anyone who asks
Yes you do
And I know that it's true
But still I care
And I want to see you there
When I need, yes indeed you are

My forbidden lover
I don't want no other
My forbidden lover
I don't want no other (x2)

I can't resist
That very strong urge to have you dear
Oh please come here
Just let me love you
Anytime and any place we dare
We'll just let them stare
You want to love everybody
And everything you can
You're the typical man
Yet still and all, I'm at your beck and call
When you need, yes indeed, you are

My forbidden lover
I don't want no other
My forbidden lover
I don't want no other (x2)

My love is forbidden
We keep our love hidden
My love is forbidden
We keep our love hidden (x2)

My forbidden lover
I don't want no other
My forbidden lover
I don't want no other

(Repeat to Fade)

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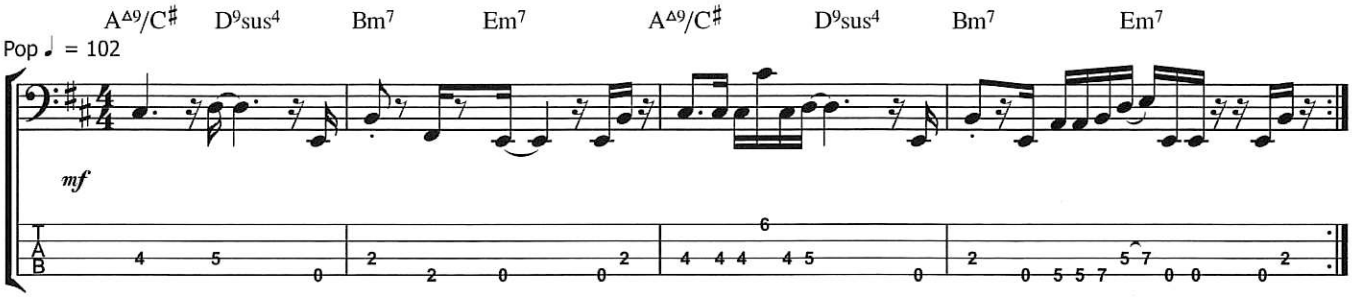
Bass Guitar

'My Forbidden Lover' is one of Bernard Edwards' finest moments. Throughout the song his bassline is syncopated, complex and adventurous, but crucially, it still retains a strong groove and provides the perfect accompaniment to Nile Rodgers' guitar part.

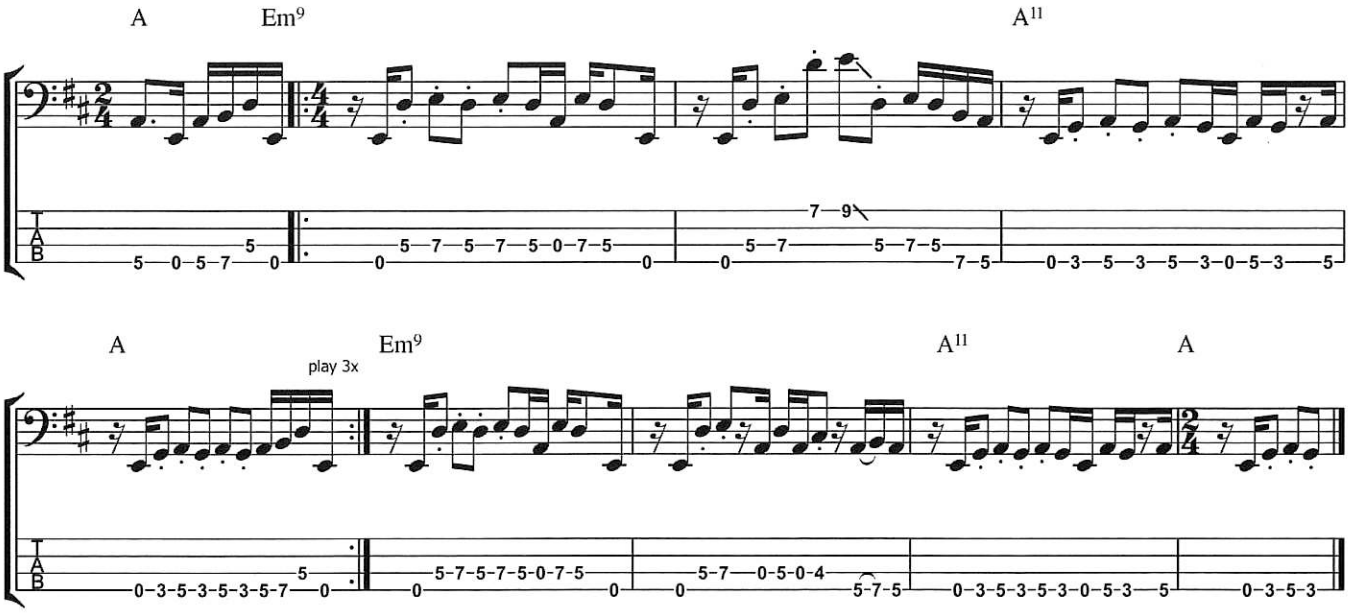
Intro/Chorus

The bassline for the Intro and Chorus sections of this song features all of Bernard's trademarks: staccato notes, syncopation, octave jumps, and sixteenth note lines. It's important to make sure the first two notes in the second and fourth bars are played staccato. It's also important that the low C♯'s either side of the higher C♯ in the third bar are cleanly articulated. This octave jump figure is something that crops up frequently in Bernard's lines, and it can be tough to pull off. Listen to the original recording for guidance.



Verse

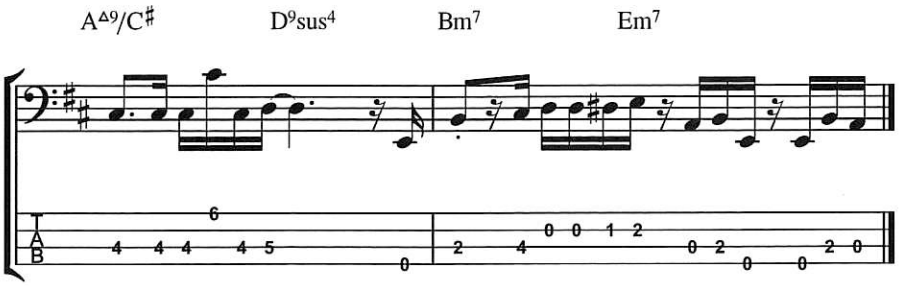
The Verse section for this song is another Bernard Edwards tour de force. As you can see, staccato notes, syncopations and sixteenth notes are, once again, all used to create a powerful and funky groove. The key to playing a line like this one effectively is to make sure that all notes are short and crisp where they need to be, and that rests are actually played as rests. It's the use of space and staccato notes that makes Bernard's grooves so effective.



Chapter 18 - Chic: My Forbidden Lover

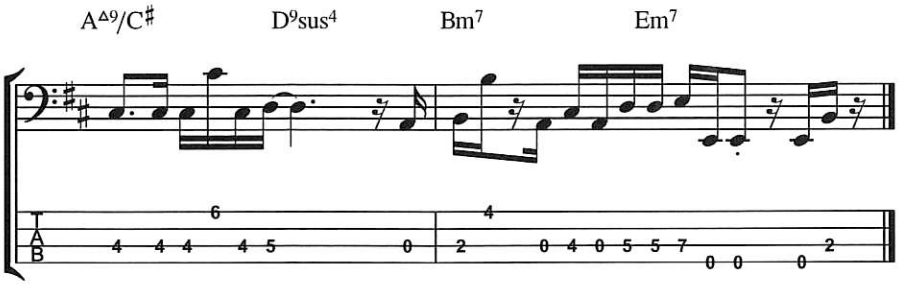
Bass Variation 1

In this variation, which occurs during the second Chorus at CD time 2.41, Bernard plays an ascending chromatic line from the Bm^7 chord to the Em^7 chord. He ends the bar with two sixteenth note groupings that begin on the second semiquaver of beats 3 and 4.



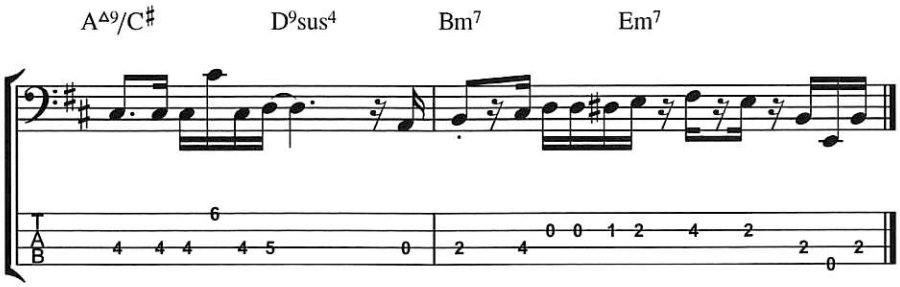
Bass Variation 2

This variation also occurs during the second Chorus at CD time 2.50.



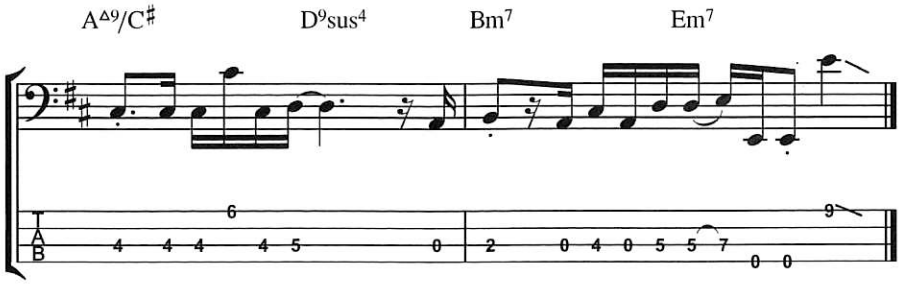
Bass Variation 3

This variation occurs at the end of the second Chorus, at CD time 3.00, and is used again at CD time 3.27. It is similar to the first variation in that it features the ascending chromatic line between the Bm^7 and Em^7 chords.



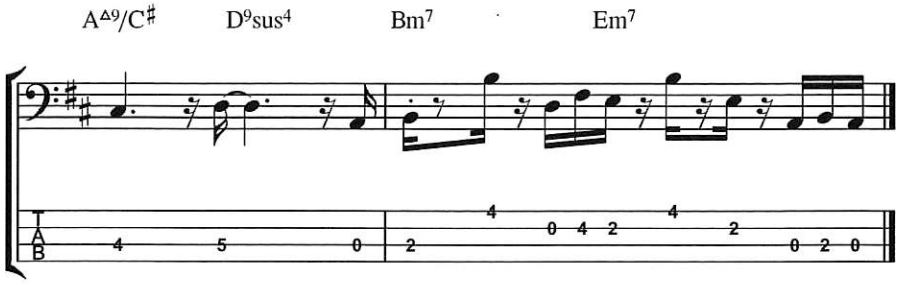
Bass Variation 4

This variation occurs during the Outro at CD time 3.09.



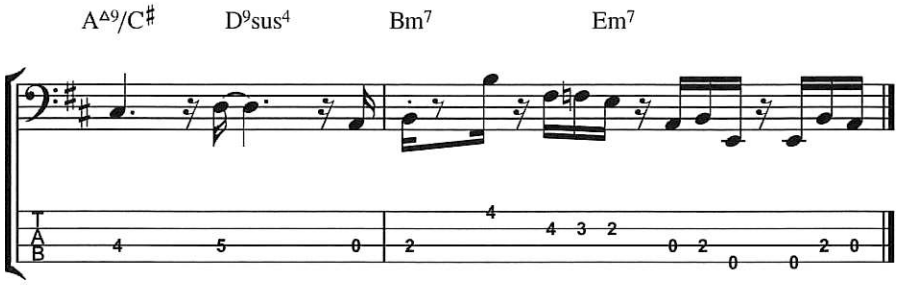
Bass Variation 5

This variation occurs during the Outro at CD time 3.46.



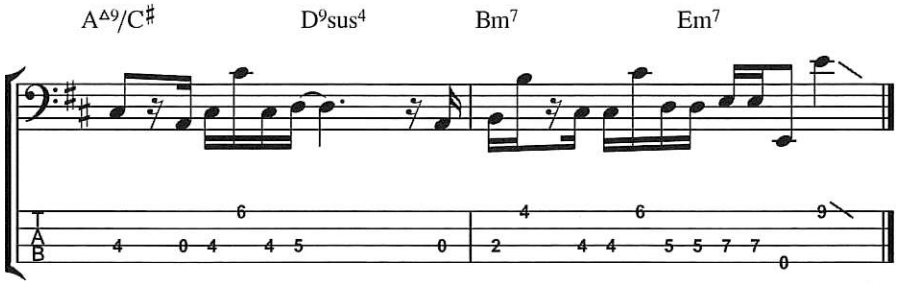
Bass Variation 6

This variation occurs during the Outro at CD time 3.55.



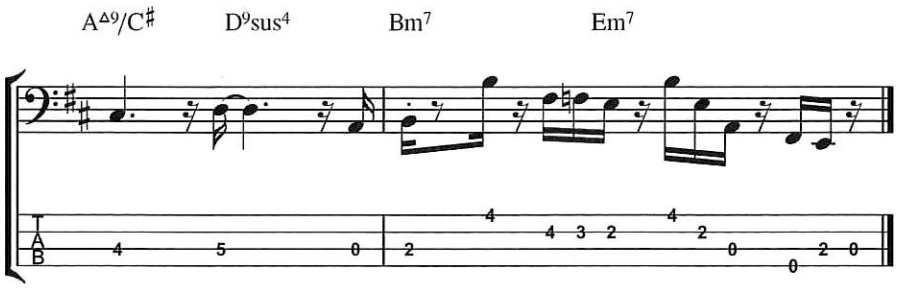
Bass Variation 7

This variation occurs during the Outro at CD time 4.04.



Bass Variation 8

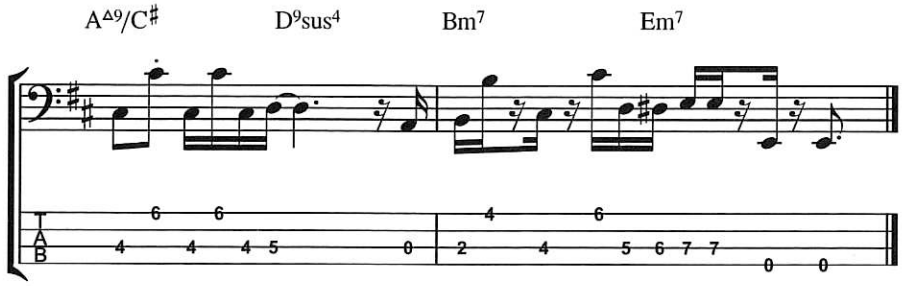
This variation occurs during the Outro at CD time 4.13.



Chapter 18 - Chic: My Forbidden Lover

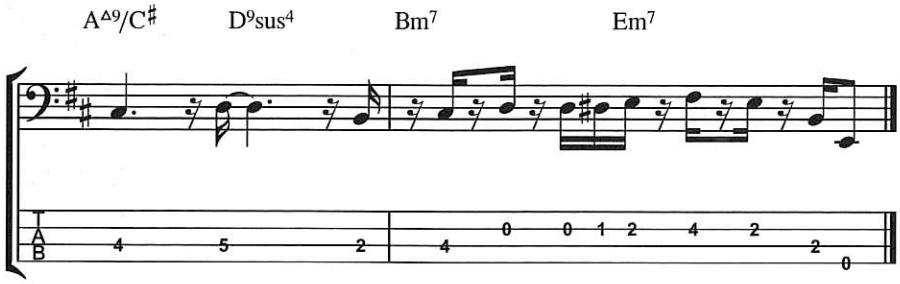
Bass Variation 9

This variation occurs during the Outro just as the track begins to fade out at CD time 4.22.



Bass Variation 10

This variation occurs during the Outro as the track fade out at CD time 4.32.

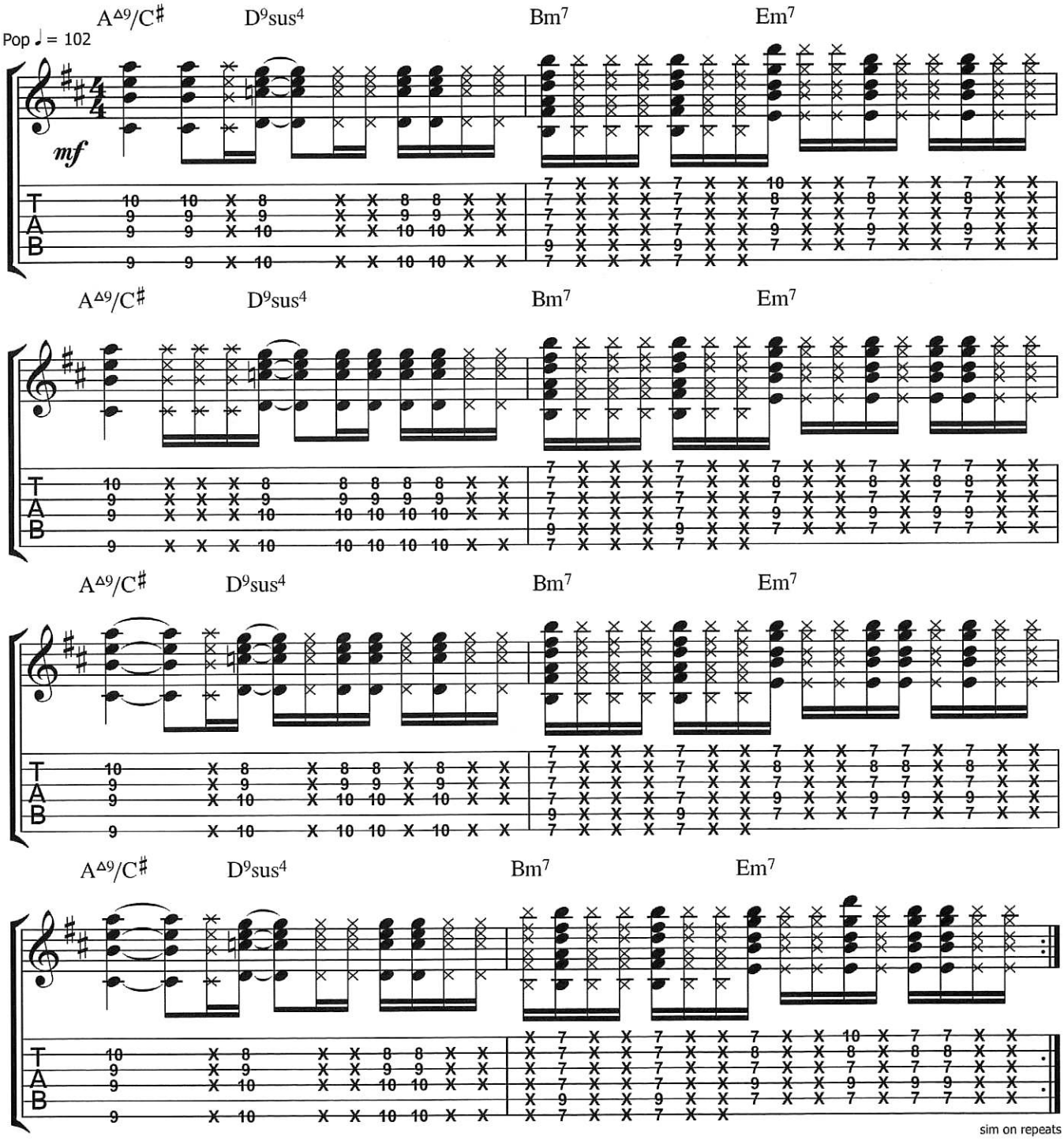


Guitar

'My Forbidden Lover' is a great showcase for both Nile's rhythm guitar playing, and his sophisticated harmonic sense.

Intro/Chorus

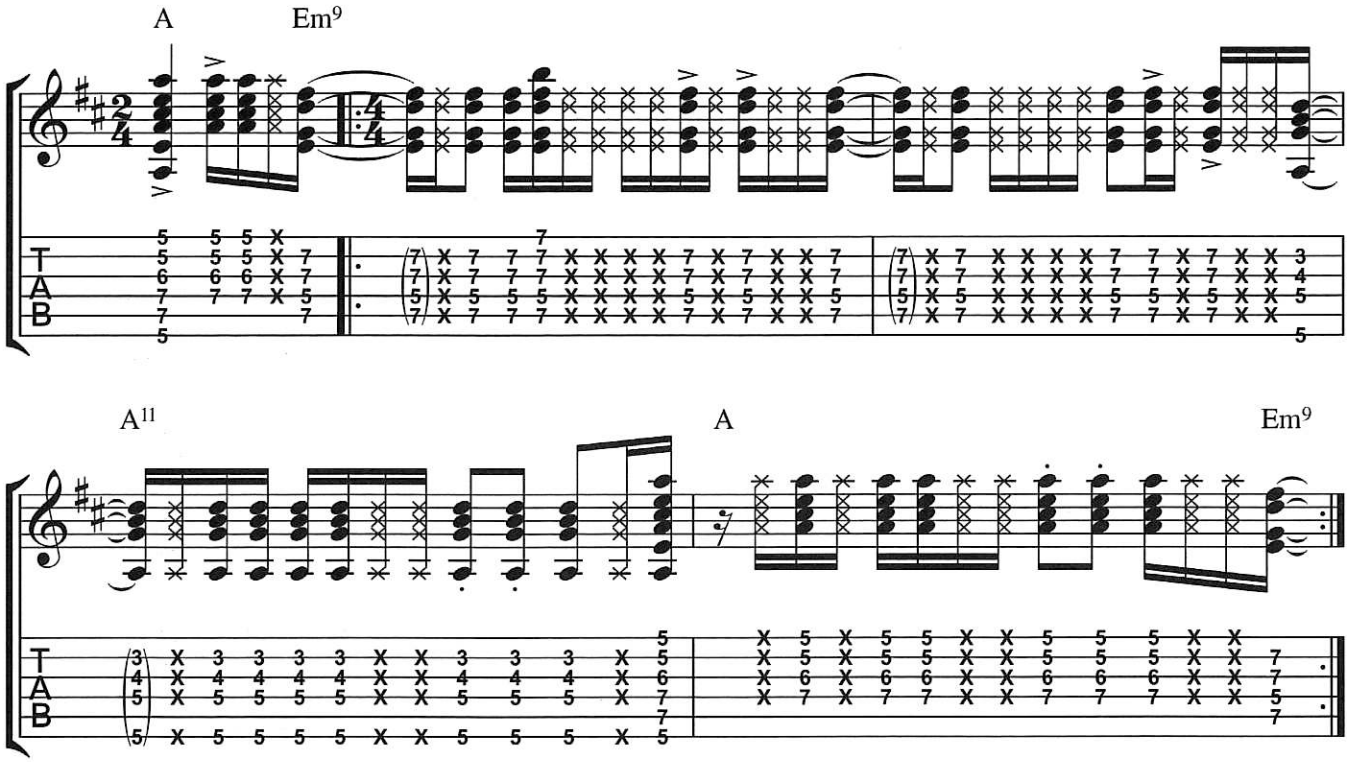
The unusual chord progression for the Intro and Chorus sections is one of the highlights of this song. It is however, a deceptively simple progression - A, D, Bm, Em. But by adding just a few harmonic twists, in the shape of inversions and suspended fourths, Nile and Bernard manage to turn the progression into something altogether more interesting. In particular, beginning the song on a first inversion chord ($A^{\Delta 9}/C\sharp$) makes for a real 'ear-grabbing' moment. The transcription below is of the first eight bars of the song, up to the point where the Chorus vocals enter. You'll see that when playing the Em^7 chord Nile occasionally adds the flat seventh (D) at the tenth fret of the top E string. This is easily done with the little finger, and is commonly done when playing with this chord shape.



Chapter 18 - Chic: My Forbidden Lover

Verse

The following transcription captures the essence of Nile's rhythm guitar part for the Verse. Each repetition of the line is slightly different rhythmically, but the chords and their positions remain the same. Nile occasionally adds the top B to the Em^9 chord (found at the seventh fret of the top E string). It's important when learning this groove to pay close attention to the accents, particularly those on the last semiquaver of each bar. Harmonically, the A^{11} chord can really be thought of as a sus^4 chord since the eleventh (D, also the fourth) resolves downwards to the C♯ in the following bar. Nile maintains a continuous sixteenth note feel throughout the Verse section of this song, so ghost notes are integral to the feel .



Chapter 19
Upside Down

Artist: Diana Ross
Album: *diana*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: #2 UK Chart, #1 Billboard Hot 100, #1 US R&B Chart

In 1979 Chic had the opportunity to write and produce an album for one of the biggest female artists in the world: Diana Ross. Ross was coming to the end of her career at Motown Records, and wanted to leave with an edgy and adventurous album. This resulting album *diana* was recorded at the Power Station and Electric Lady in the typical Chic fashion: Ross was not allowed to hear the songs beforeband, and recorded her vocals in the dark, with just a light to read the lyrics by. Her not having heard the song before allowed Nile and Bernard to capture a spontaneous, live performance.

The finished record was delivered to Motown in March 1980, with Diana concerned about the sound and content. She felt the record was too heavily biased towards Chic, and consequently had the entire album remixed by Motown engineer Russ Terrana. The tracks were sped up slightly in order to give Ross's voice a more youthful edge, and alternative vocal performances were used. Long instrumental passages were shortened, and the whole thing was generally made to be what Motown and Diana considered to be more 'radio-friendly'. Chic were devastated to learn that their work had been re-engineered without their knowledge.

The album was of course, a huge hit, and to this day is Diana's biggest selling album. The original Chic mixes were finally released in 2003 as part of a deluxe edition reissue of the album. The following three songs in this book were transcribed from the Chic mixes, rather than the original release.

Song Lyrics

Apparently Diana wanted the song to feature a 'chant', something that her children could easily sing along to. The opening lyrical motif certainly provides one.

I said upside down you're turning me
You're giving love instinctively
Round and round you're turning me

Upside down
Boy you turn me
Inside out
And round and round (x2)

Instinctively you give to me
The love that I need
I cherish the moments with you
Respectfully I see to thee
I'm aware that you're cheating
When no one makes me feel like you do

Upside down
Boy you turn me
Inside out
And round and round (x2)

I know you got charm and appeal
You always play the field
I'm crazy to think you're all mine
As long as the sun continues to shine
There's a place in my heart for you
That's the bottom line

Upside down
Boy you turn me
Inside out
And round and round (x2)

Instinctively you give to me
The love that I need
I cherish the moments with you
Respectfully I see to thee
I'm aware that you're cheating
But no one makes me feel like you do

(Repeat Chorus)

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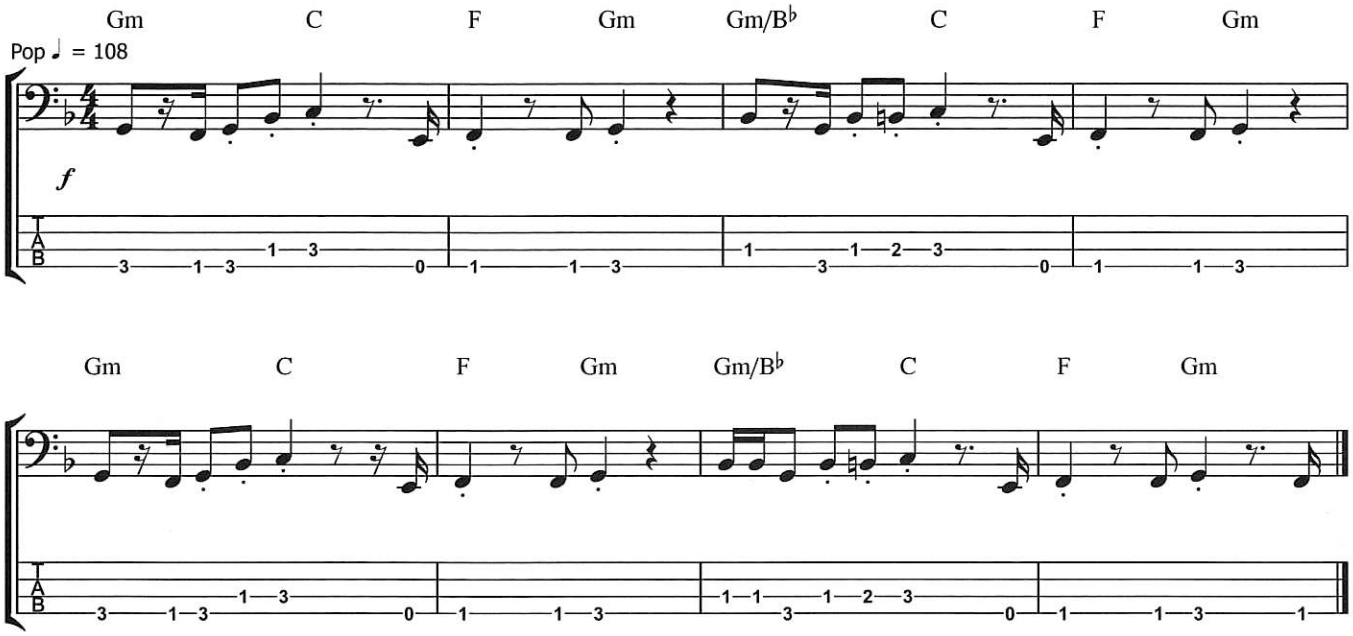
Chapter 19 - Diana Ross: Upside Down

Bass Guitar

Bernard plays a simple groove throughout this song, but it's one that is enlivened by some nice chromatic passing notes and his usual smattering of sixteenth note anticipations.

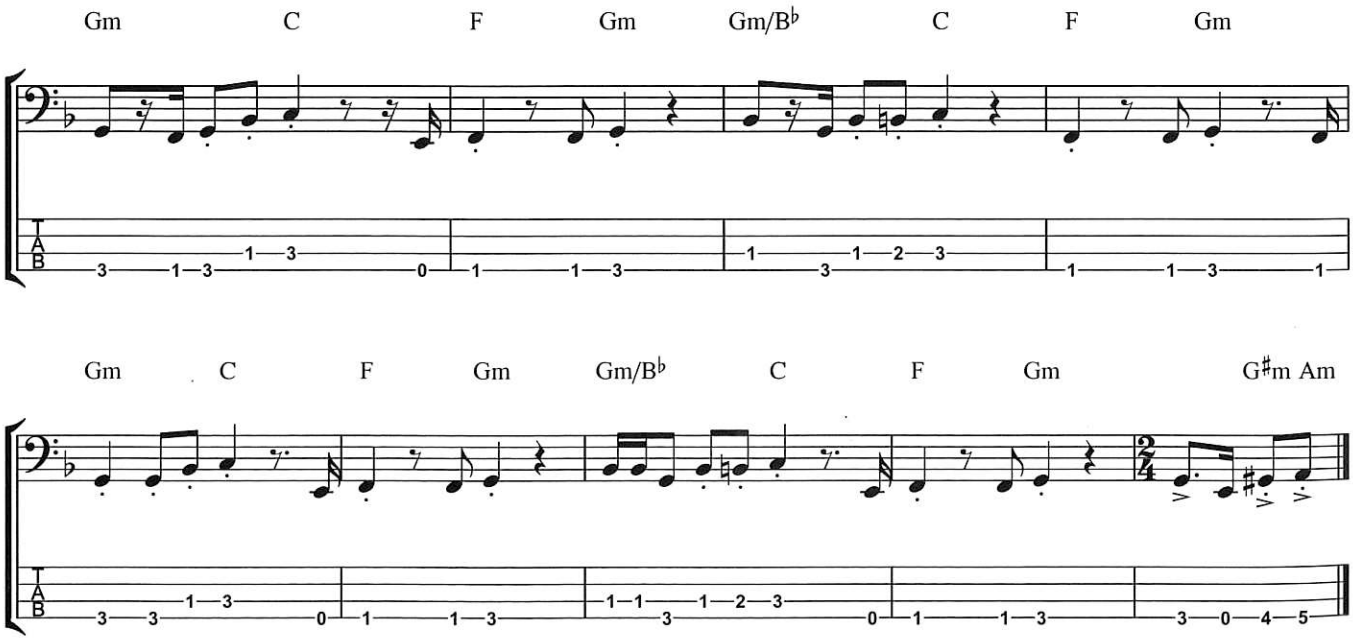
Intro

For the Intro Bernard introduces the following bassline, which is also used for the Chorus sections of the song. Staccato notes are as important as always, and the low E sixteenth note anticipations in the first and third bars are crucial to the groove . These are almost ghost notes (and in some instances they are), but provide a rhythmic 'push' to the groove.



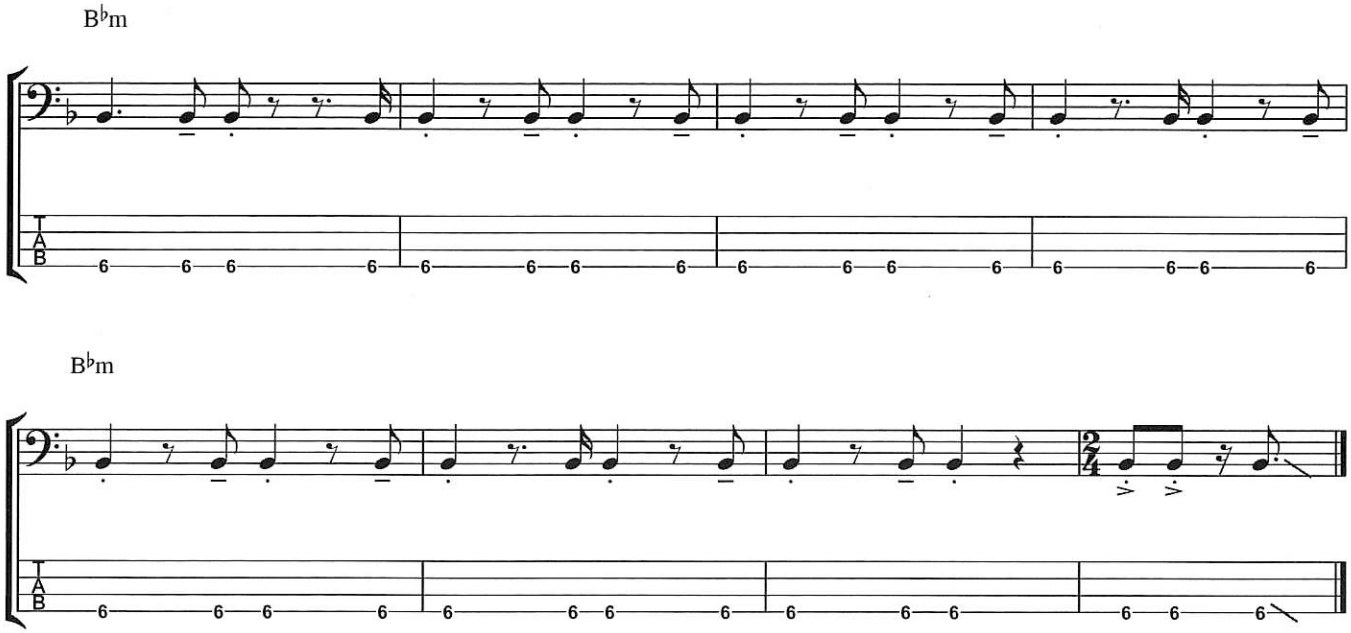
Chorus

Below is a transcription of the first Chorus of the song, directly following the Intro. This is largely the same as the Intro section, but ends with a 2/4 bar that serves as a chromatic transition section to the Verse.



Verse

Bernard plays a very simple, but highly rhythmic groove during the Verse. The use of tenuto and staccato markings during this section are very important to the feel, as is the actual placing of the notes. The Verse also ends with a 2/4 bar that leads back into the Chorus.

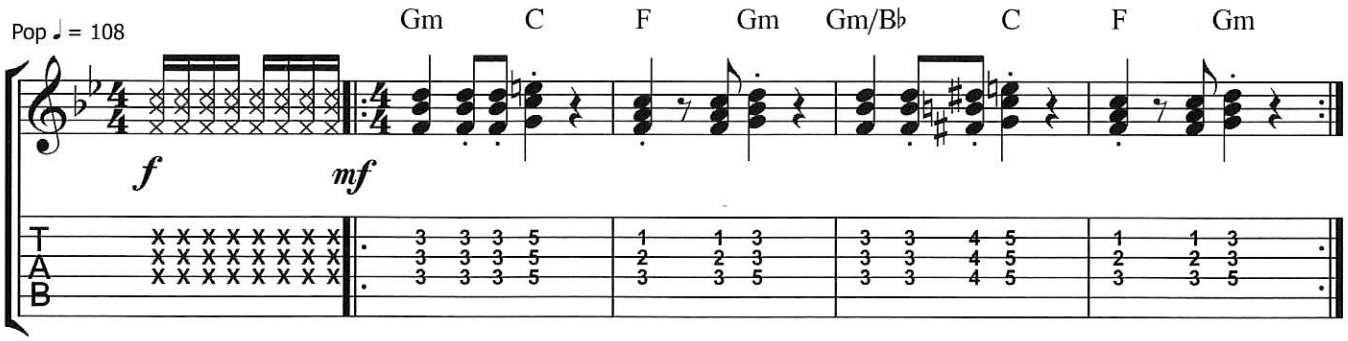


Guitar

Nile shines on this track which feature a great rhythm part and some funky single note lines during the Chorus.

Intro/Chorus

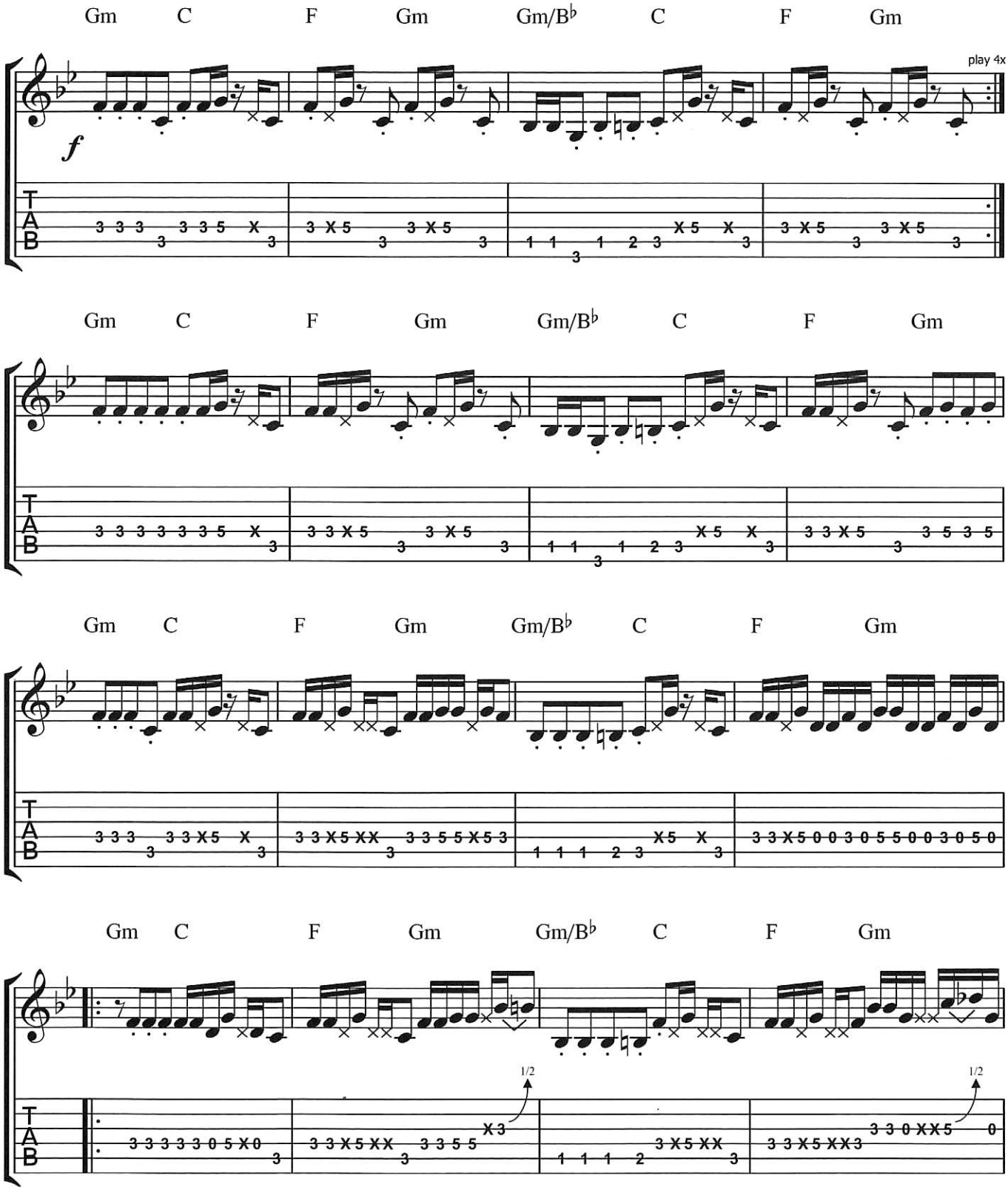
After eight loud ghosted sixteenth notes, Nile's rhythm part enters. This simple part, which is used for much of the song is understated but effective. The use of a chromatic chord in bar 3 of the section fits perfectly with Bernard's chromatic bass figure.

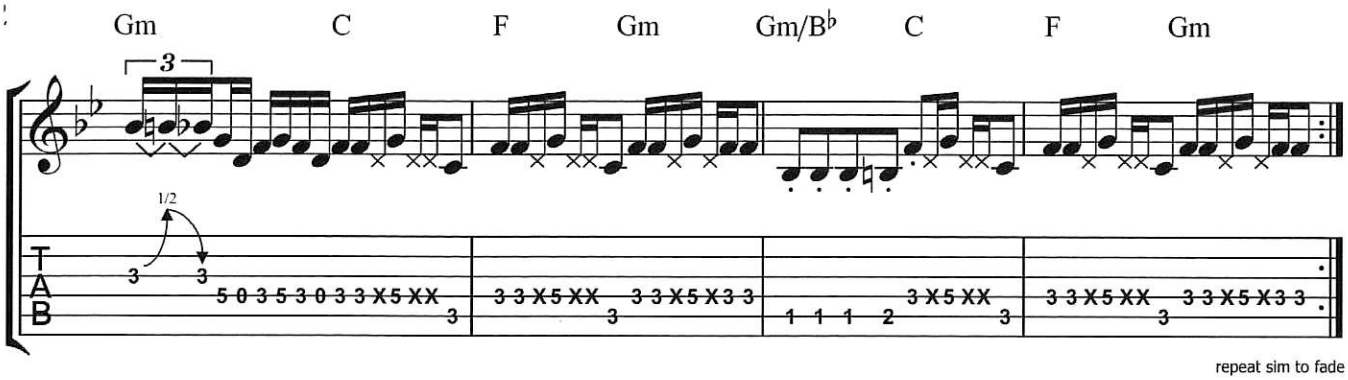


Chapter 19 - Diana Ross: Upside Down

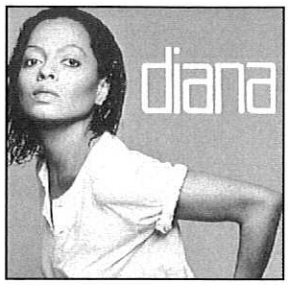
Chorus (Guitar 2)

The following transcription begins at CD time 2.42 and is the single note line that is used during the later Choruses of the song. You should play this part loud and hard. A little crunch in your tone will help you to match the tone of Nile's Strat on the recording.




Gm
C
F
Gm
Gm/B♭
C
F
Gm
3
1/2
T
A
B
repeat sim to fade

Chapter 20
I'm Coming Out



Artist: Diana Ross
Album: *diana*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: #13 UK Chart, #5 US Chart, #6 US R&B Chart

'I'm Coming Out' was written in reaction to Diana's wish to have a new life. As *diana* would be her last album for Motown Records (whom she had been with for 20 years), the song was a celebration of her new start. This track is a fantastic showcase for Nile Rodgers' rhythm guitar work. The Intro in particular is memorable thanks to Nile's guitar part, the stop-start drums/horns pattern and Ross's triumphant vocal.

Song Lyrics

Nile Rodgers says in the liner notes to the deluxe edition of *diana* that he was inspired to write the song after visiting a nightclub and witnessing three transvestites dressed as Diana Ross. This led him to wonder what were to happen if she were to sing 'I'm Coming Out'. When asked about it by Ross at a later date he denied knowing it was a statement used by gay people. Because of its lyrics, the song was quickly adopted by gays and lesbians as an anthem, and further enhanced Ross's status as a gay icon. For the last twenty years, Diana has usually opened her live show with the song, which remains enormously popular.

I'm coming out
I'm coming
I'm coming out

I'm coming out
I want the world to know
Got to let it show
I'm coming out
I want the world to know
Got to let it show (x2)

There's a new me coming out
And I just had to live
And I wanna give
I'm completely positive
I think this time around
I am gonna do it
Like you never knew it
Ooh, I'll make it through

The time has come for me
To break out of the shell
I have to shout
I am coming out

I'm coming out
I want the world to know
Got to let it show
I'm coming out
I want the world to know
Got to let it show (x2)

I've got to show the world
All that I wanna be
And all my abillities
There's so much more to me
Somehow, I have to make them
Just understand
I got it well in hand
And, oh, how I've planned

I'm spreading love
There's no need to fear
And I just feel so glad
Every time I hear:

I'm coming out
I want the world to know
Got to let it show
I'm coming out
I want the world to know
Got to let it show
I want the world to know
I got to let it show

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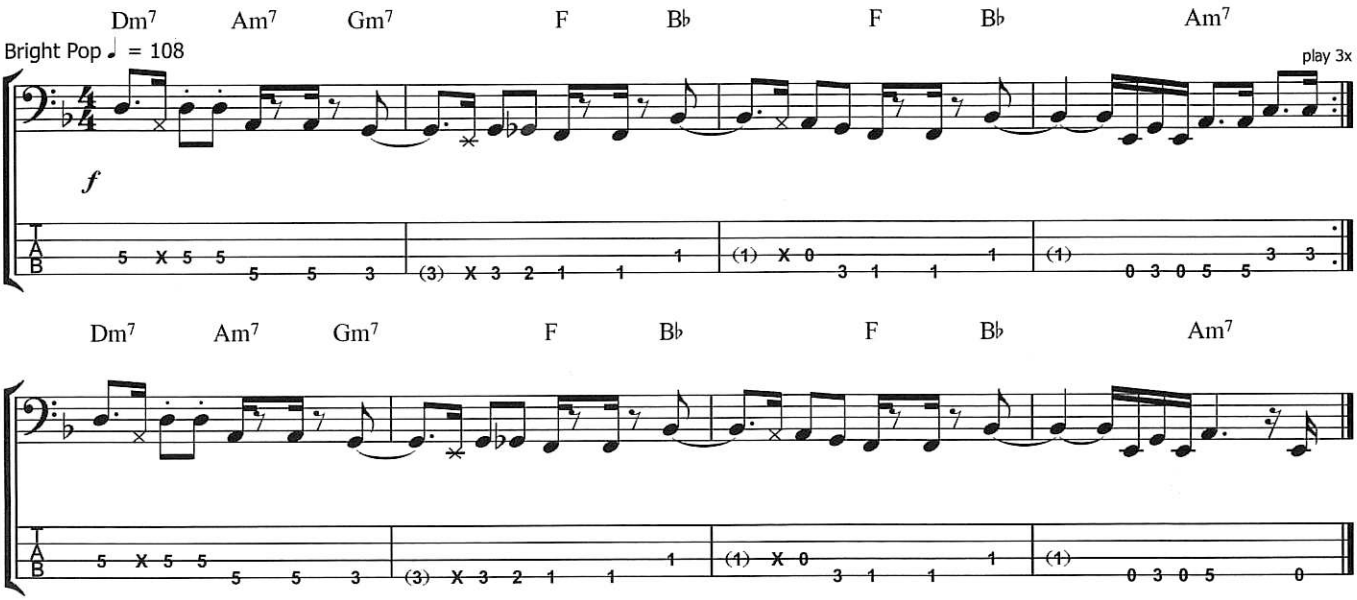
Bass Guitar

Bernard's bass is absent from large sections of this song - the Intro and Breakdown, but he more than makes up for this with a great line during the Verse and Chorus sections.

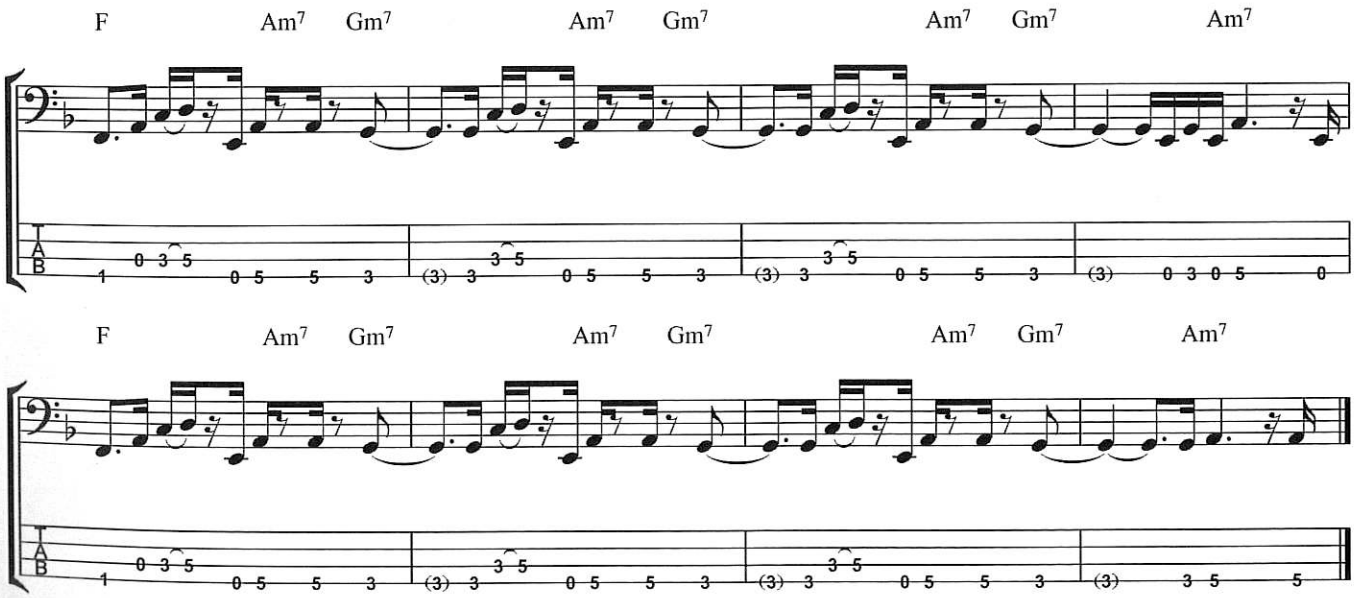
Chorus

The following is a transcription of the first Chorus with the full band, which starts at CD time 0.53. Bernard's bass groove is highly rhythmic, locking in with the guitar on the Am^7 - Gm^7 and F - $B\flat$ transistions. His trademark use of staccato and ghost notes is in evidence here, and there are some great melodic lines that connect the chords.



Verse

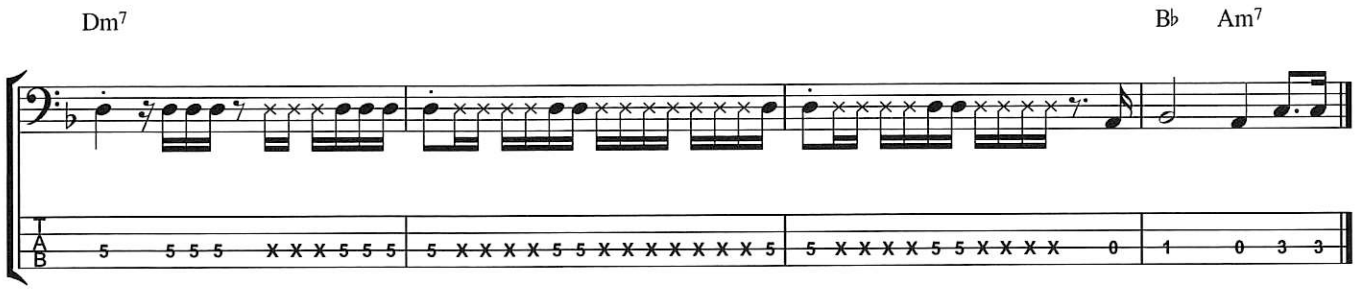
During the Verse Bernard plays a great melodic motif on the F chord, then reuses it in the second and third bars.



Chapter 20 - Diana Ross: I'm Coming Out

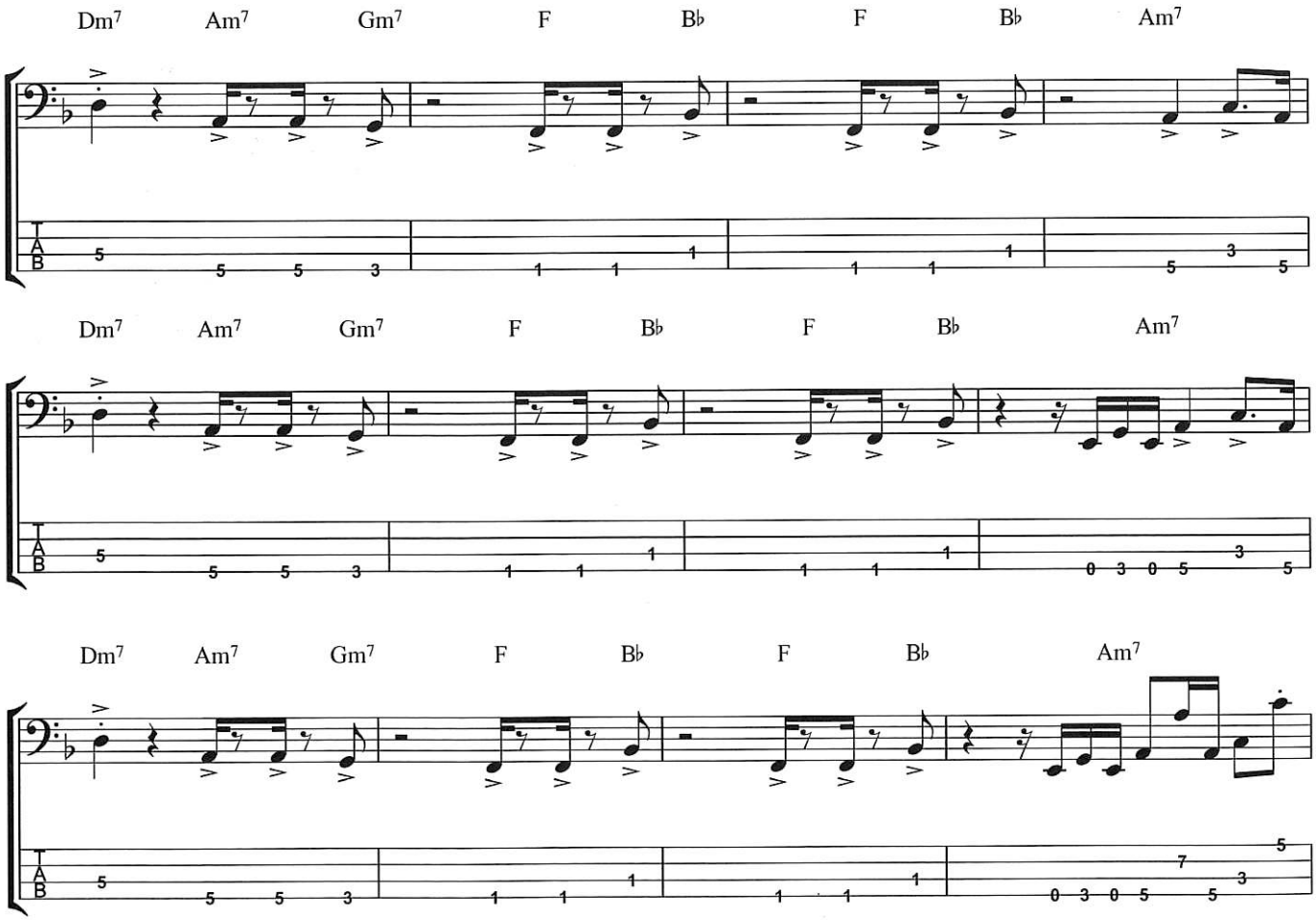
Bridge

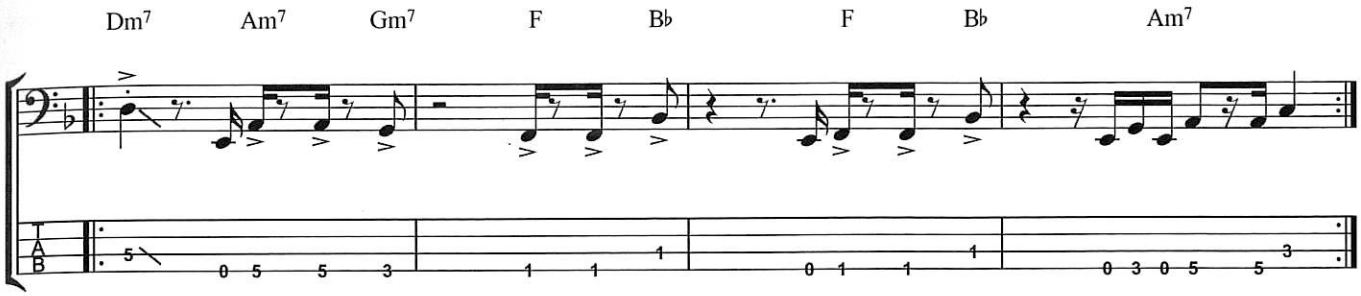
Bernard may only play root notes during the Bridge, but he makes them pretty interesting. He maintains a sixteenth note line that is made up predominantly of ghost notes, with pitched notes jumping out at appropriate moments. This is a great example of how Bernard was able to add some magic to a very simple part. Although this would sound great played with a pick, or with Bernard's picking technique, I believe he played the part using standard fingerstyle technique.



Chorus

This transcription is of the Chorus after the Breakdown section, and can be heard at CD time 4.34. Here Bernard simplifies his part enormously, only playing stabs with Tony Thompson's kick drum. As the line goes on he adds in some choice fills such as the ones found in bars 8 and 12.



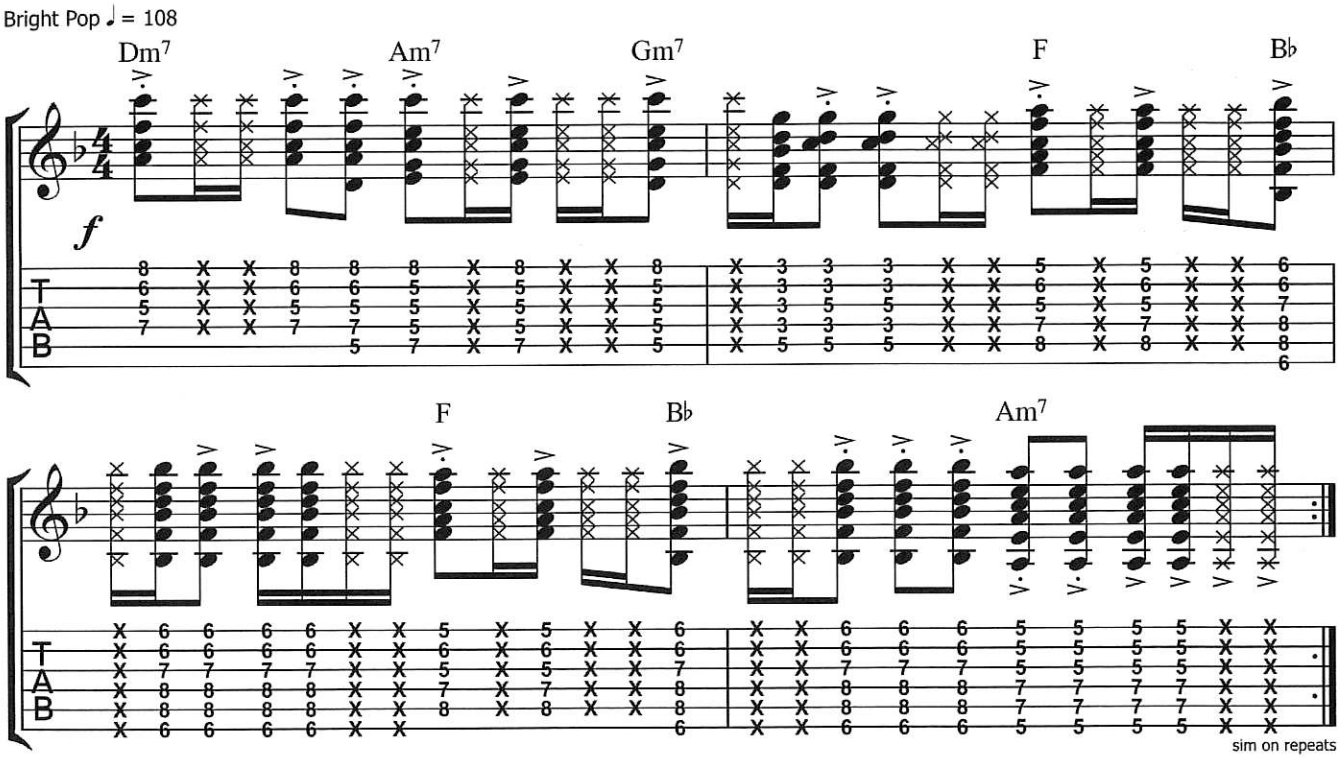


Guitar

'I'm Coming Out' is yet another great showcase for the various elements of Nile's playing. Aside from a great rhythm part, we have some great fills, and a fantastic single note line.

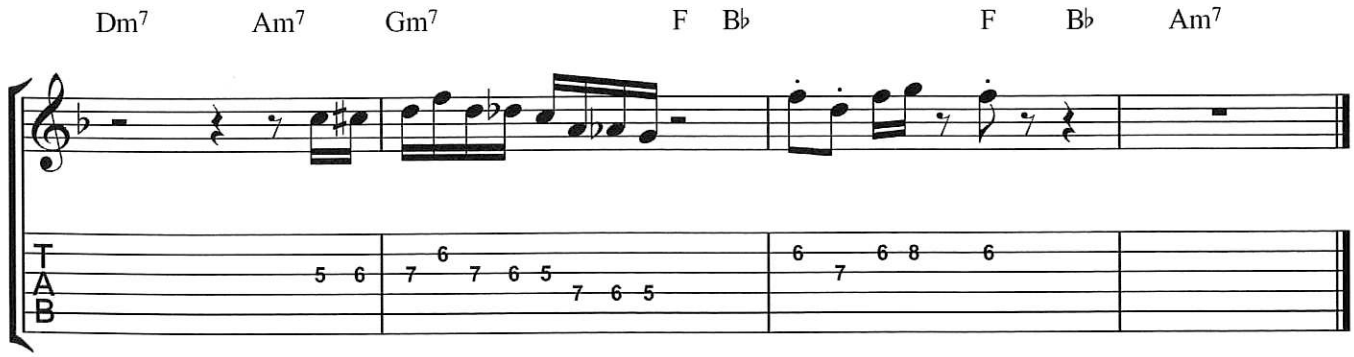
Intro/Chorus

Nile's guitar introduction to this song is a real rhythm guitar showcase. His use of staccato chords and ghost notes is second to none, and voicings are as inventive as ever.



Guitar Fill 1 (Guitar 2)

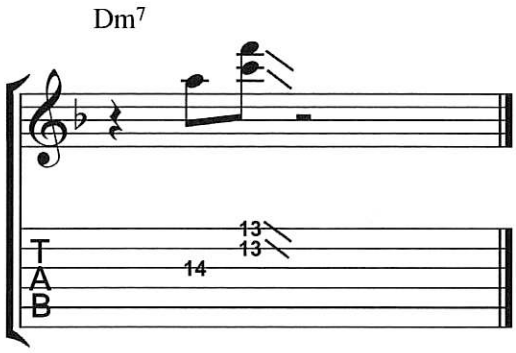
This is Nile's overdubbed guitar fill that occurs at several points throughout the song. it can be heard for the first time at CD time 0.27. The line is based on the C Blues scale, with a couple of extra chromatic notes thrown in.



Chapter 20 - Diana Ross: I'm Coming Out

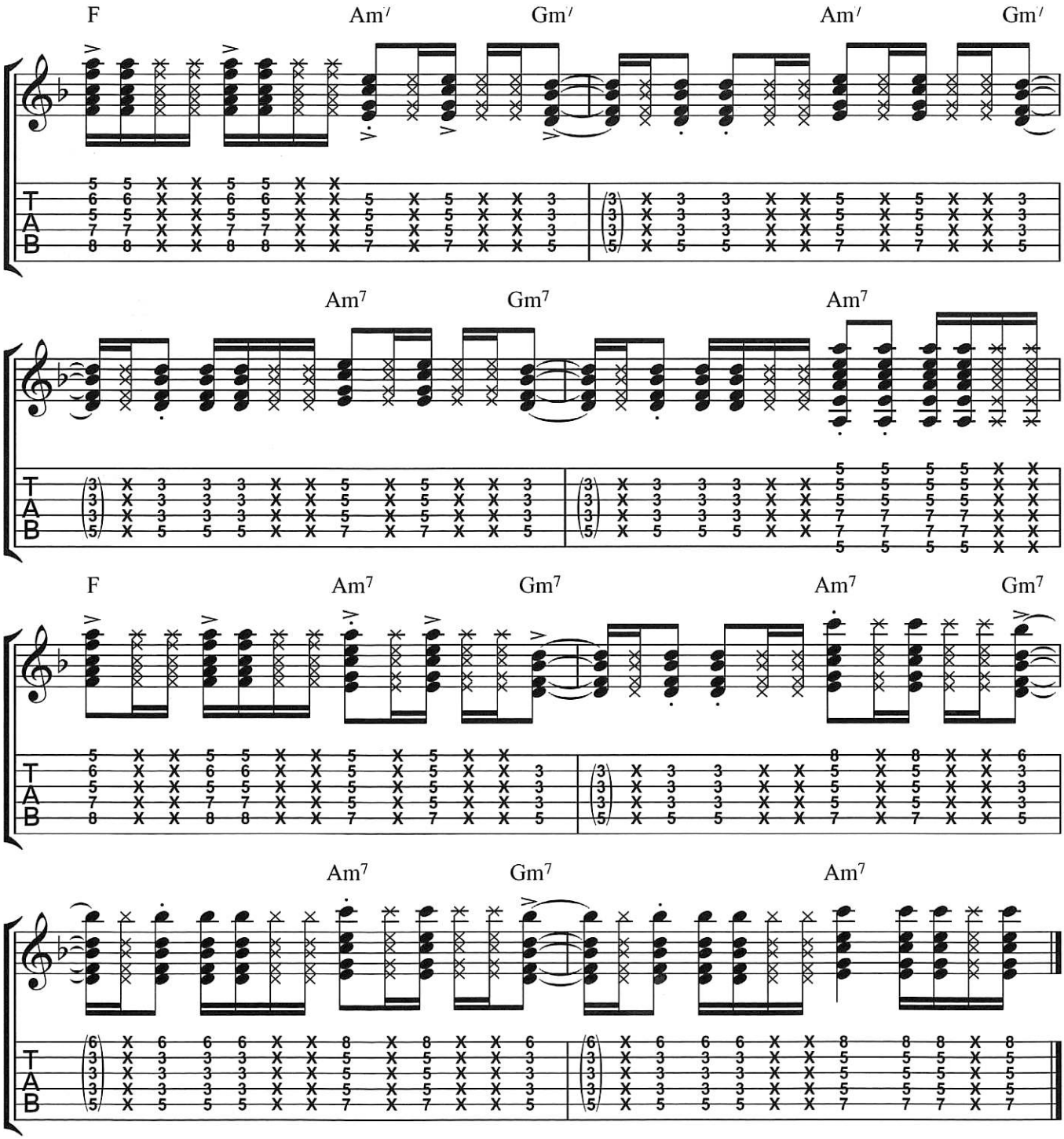
Guitar Fill 2 (Guitar 2)

This fill can be heard at CD time 0.36.



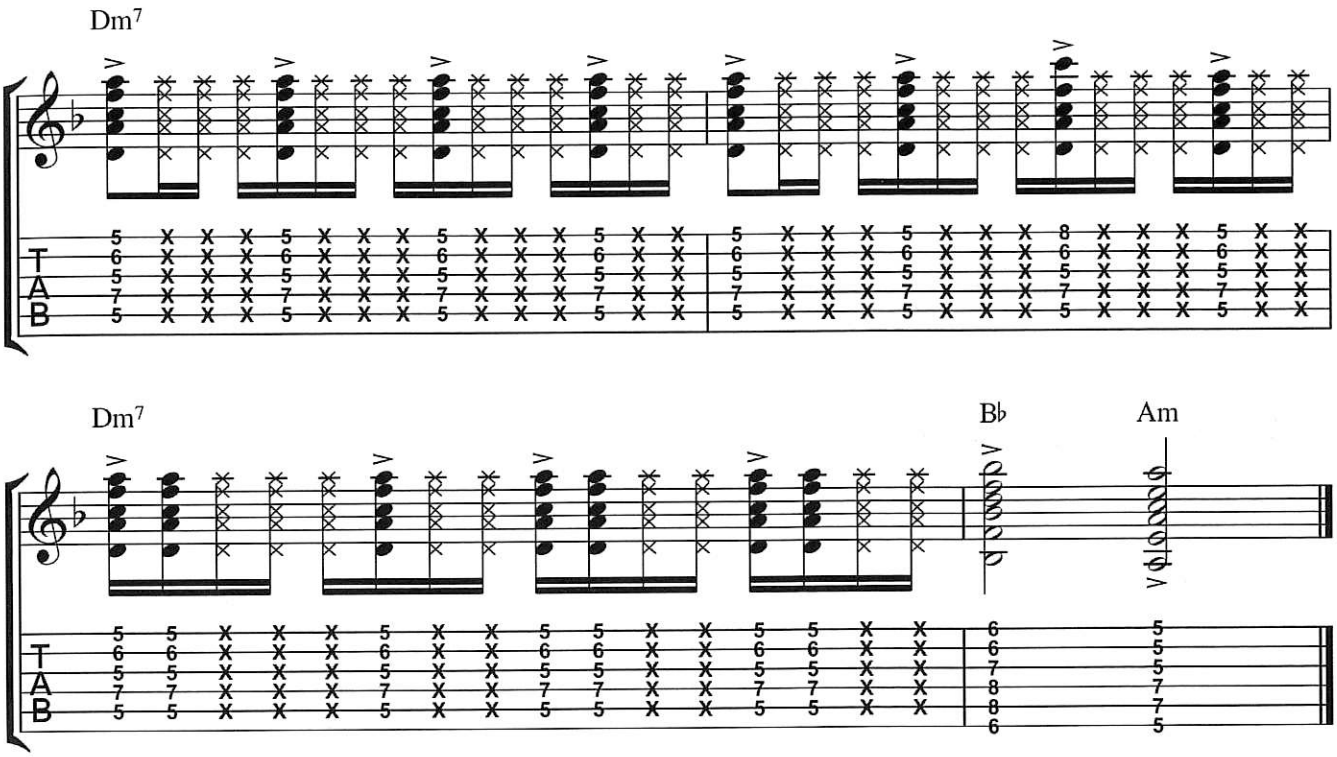
Verse

During the Verse, Nile continues the same rhythmic ideas that he introduced in the Intro and Chorus.



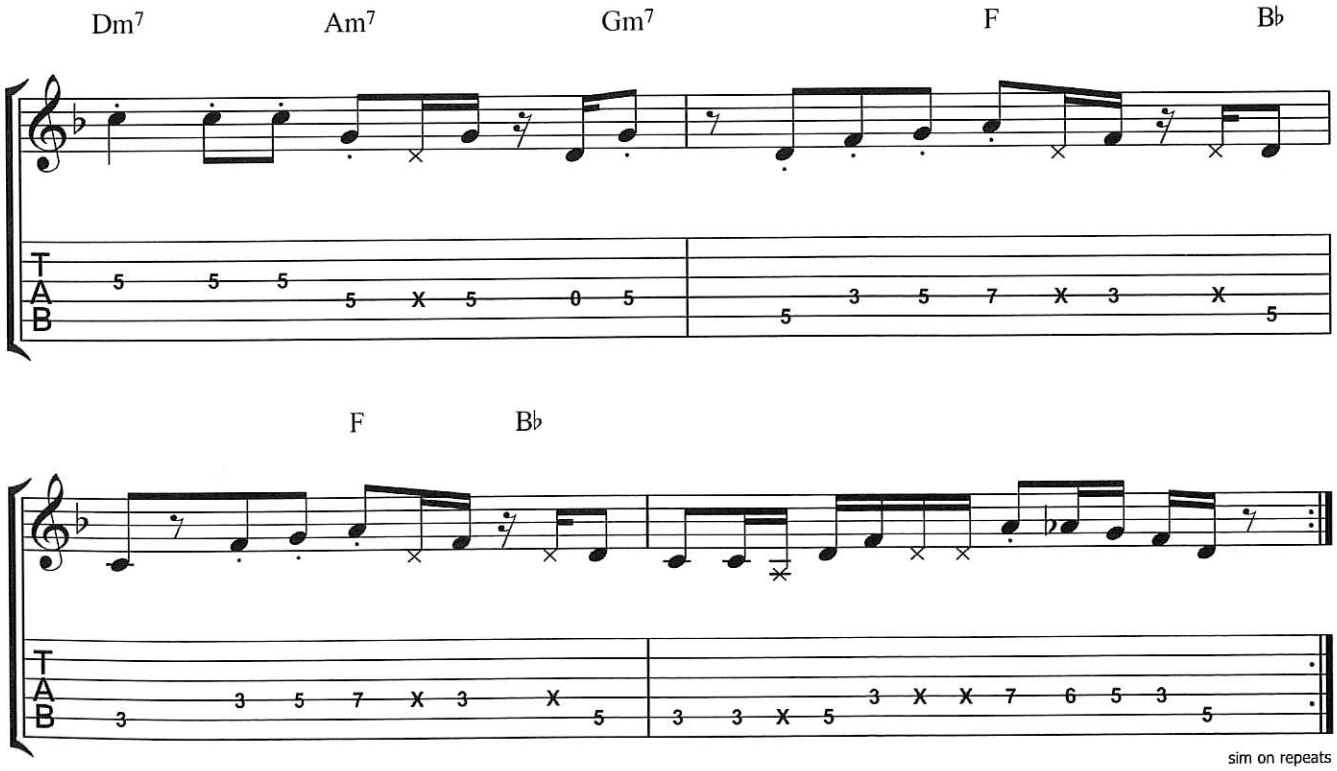
Bridge

Nile's rhythm part during the Bridge is very rhythmic like Bernard's. As you can see, the line is predominantly ghost notes, with pitched chords popping out on syncopated beats .

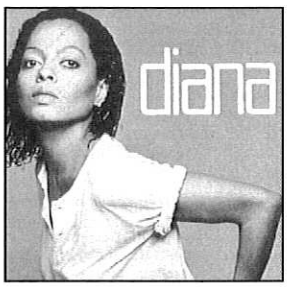


Chorus (Guitar 2)

This is the single note line that can be heard during the Chorus sections. Although this line occurs earlier in the track, the transcription below starts at CD time 5.44, where it is much more audible. This line is used, with only very minor variations, throughout most of the Choruses in the song.



Chapter 21
My Old Piano



Artist: Diana Ross
Album: *diana*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: #5 UK Chart

'My Old Piano' is one of the best and most overlooked tracks on the Chic produced *diana* album. It is also a fantastic showase for the musicians of the Chic Organization, in particular Nile Rodgers and pianist Raymond Jones. The guitar/piano solo trading in the closing section of the song is a great example of the high level of musicianship that Chic brought to the *diana* album.

'My Old Piano' reached #5 on the UK Pop Charts when released in 1980.

Song Lyrics

This song is a simple tribute to the piano. Lines such as 'his eighty-eight key smile' are particularly memorable. Nile has said that he saw a grand piano in Diana Ross's house, but wasn't sure if she was able to play it or not. He decided that it didn't matter, and wrote this song about it anyway.

Love is called
My old piano
I have a ball with
My old piano (x2)

My baby entertains
The real life of my parties
But still retains
In all the dignity
His international style
Exudes an air of royalty
His eighty-eight key smile
Is so pleasant to see

Love is called
My old piano
I have a ball with
My old piano (x2)

My old keyboard
Won't stand for a corner
He demands the middle of the room
Your heart dissolves
When he tips you so gracefully
'Til you're involved
In a babygrand affair

Love is called
My old piano
I have a ball with
My old piano (x2)

He entertains
The real life of my parties
But still retains
In all the dignity
His international style
Exudes an air of royalty
His eighty-eight key smile
Is so pleasant to see

My old keyboard
Won't stand for a corner
He demands the middle of the room
Your heart dissolves
While he tips you so gracefully
'Til you're involved
In a babygrand affair

Love is called
My old piano
I have a ball with
My old piano (x2)

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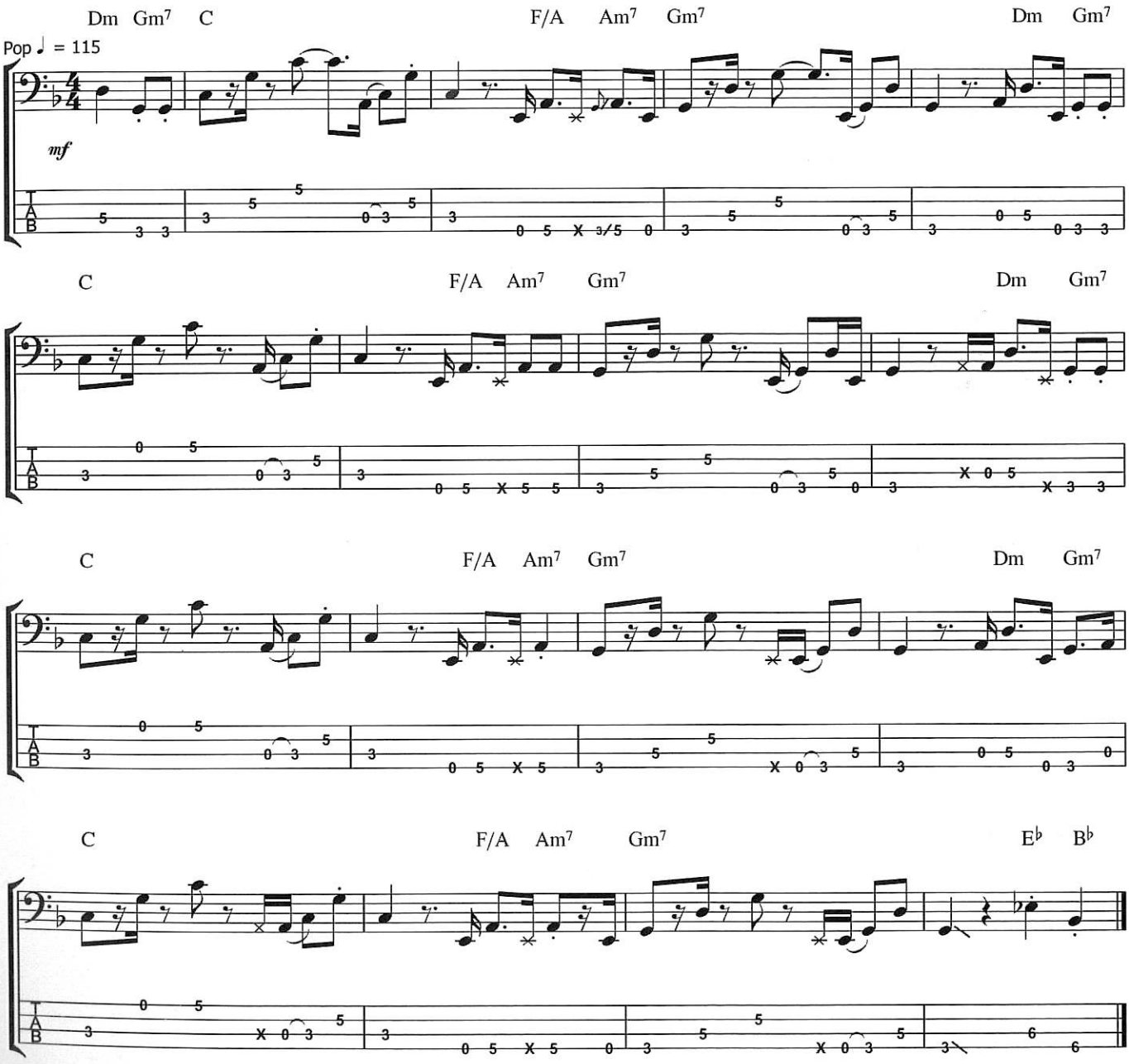
Bass Guitar

'My Old Piano' features a melodically simple, but bouncy bassline from Bernard Edwards. His inventive use of staccato notes, ghost notes and grace notes is evident throughout the track.

Chorus

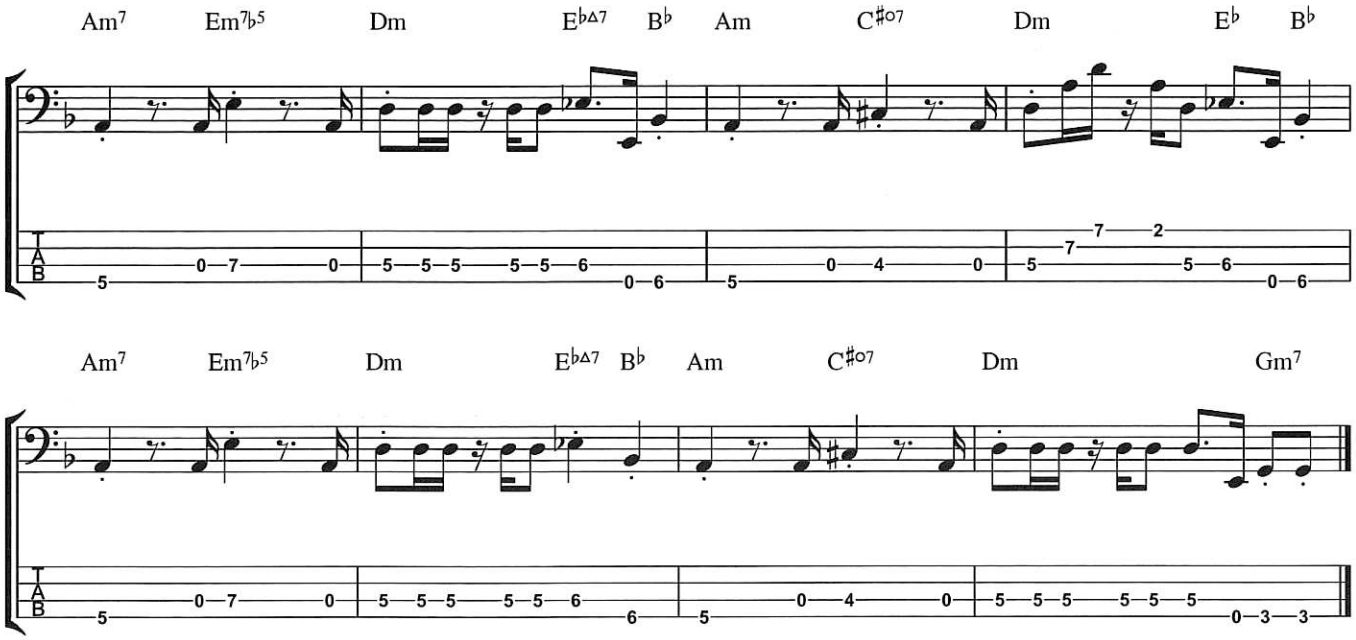
For the Chorus sections Bernard plays simple root-fifth-octave figures over the C and Gm chords and keeps his line harmonically simple in the bars in between. Note how he uses ghost notes and grace notes to add rhythmic excitment to the line in the second and fourth bars of the sequence. Staccato notes are vital to the feel here - listen closely to the track to hear how Bernard brings this line to life. The $E^{\flat\Delta 7}$ and $B^{\flat}$ chords in the final bar serve as a transition into the Verse.



Chapter 21 - Diana Ross: My Old Piano

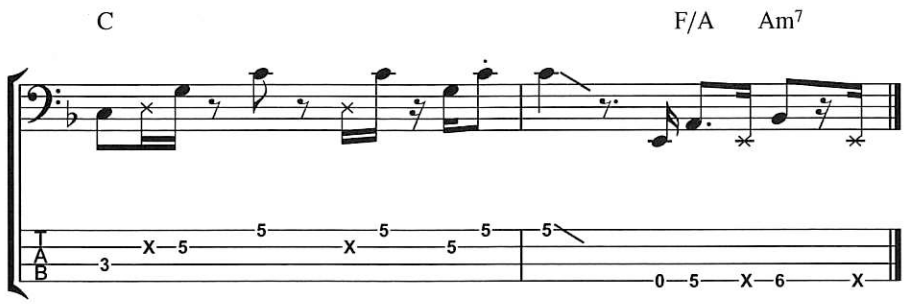
Verse

For the Verse sections Bernard plays a simple figure in the first and third bars, and doubles the rhythm of Nile's guitar part in the second and fourth. Note his use of a root-fifth-octave pattern in the fourth bar. Once again, this line needs to be played staccato where indicated for maximum impact.



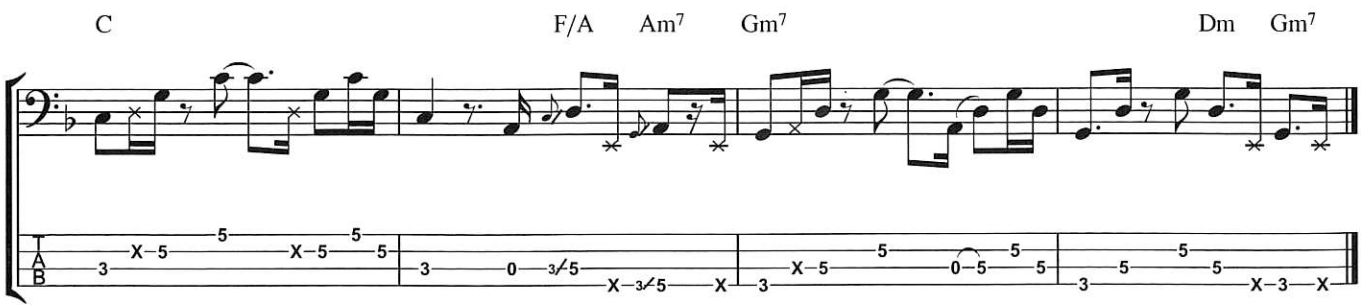
Bass Variation 1

There is very little variation from Bernard during this track, aside from the following two examples. In this variation, which can be heard at CD time 3.45 Bernard plays a rhythmic fill in the first bar. His note choices are merely chord tones, but the funky rhythm, with its rests, ghost note and glissando, makes it a great fill.



Bass Variation 2

This variation occurs in the Chorus towards the end of the song and can be heard at CD time 3.54. Here Bernard adds a little excitement to the first and third bars by playing some basic fills that make use of chord tones, specifically the fifth and octave.

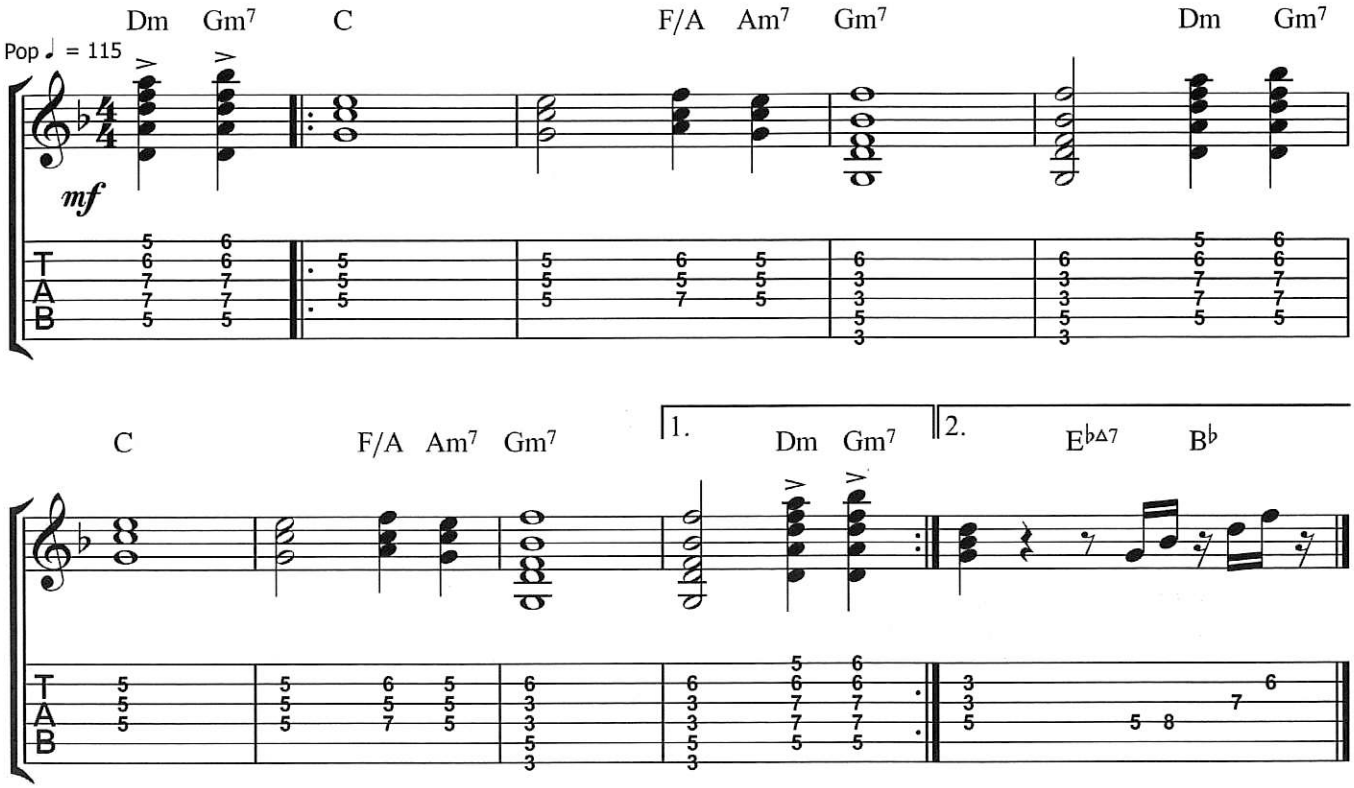


Guitar

This song is a real showcase for Nile. While he keeps his part simple during the Chorus sections, his Jazz-tinged line in the Verse is both challenging and adventurous. Nile's guitar trades solos with the piano in the closing section of the song, allowing him a rare opportunity to show off his soloing skills.

Intro/Chorus

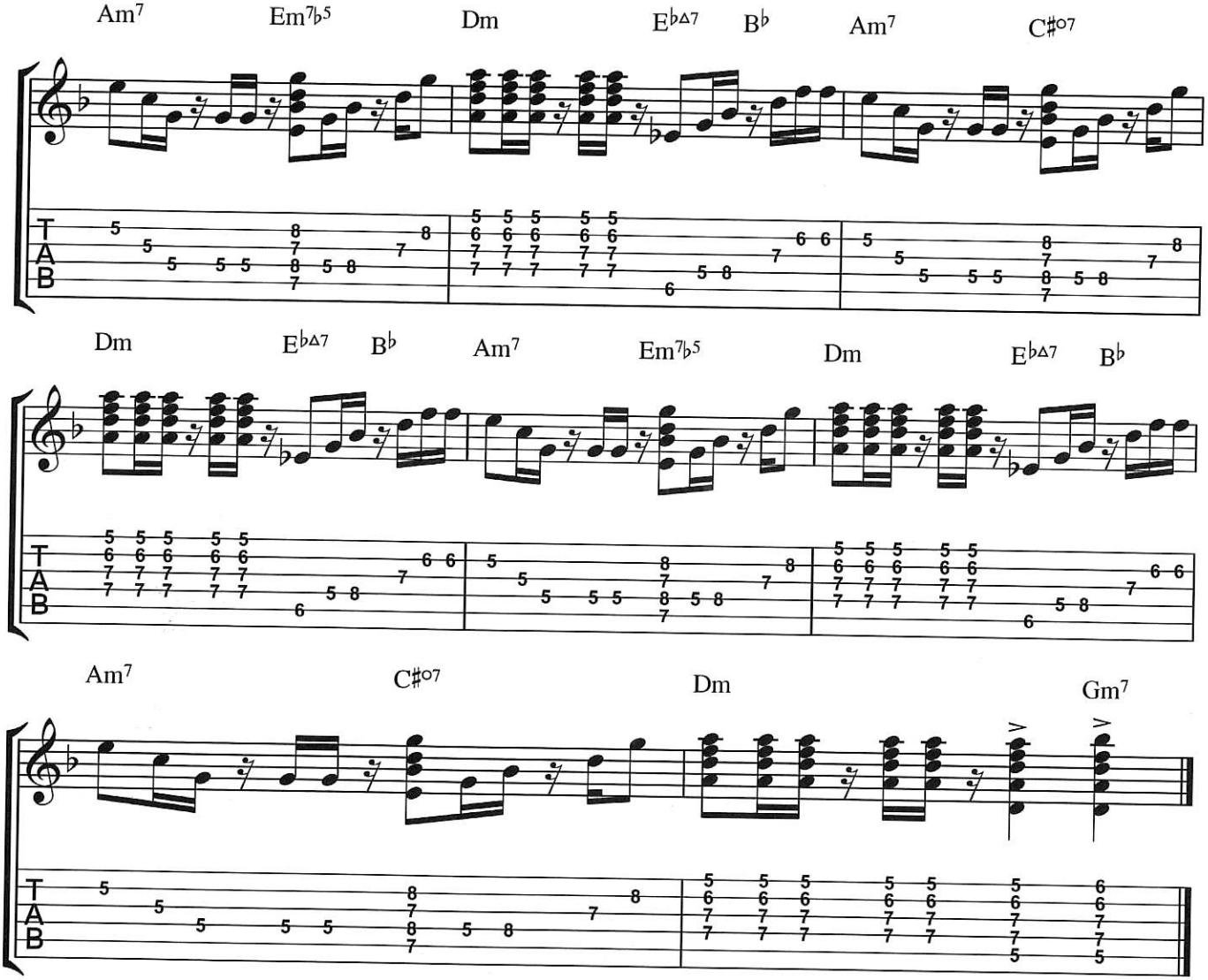
Nile plays a simple rhythm guitar part for the Intro and Chorus sections of this song. The fill in the second time bar is the beginning of the busy sixteenth note line that Nile plays over the Verse sections of the song.



Chapter 21 - Diana Ross: My Old Piano

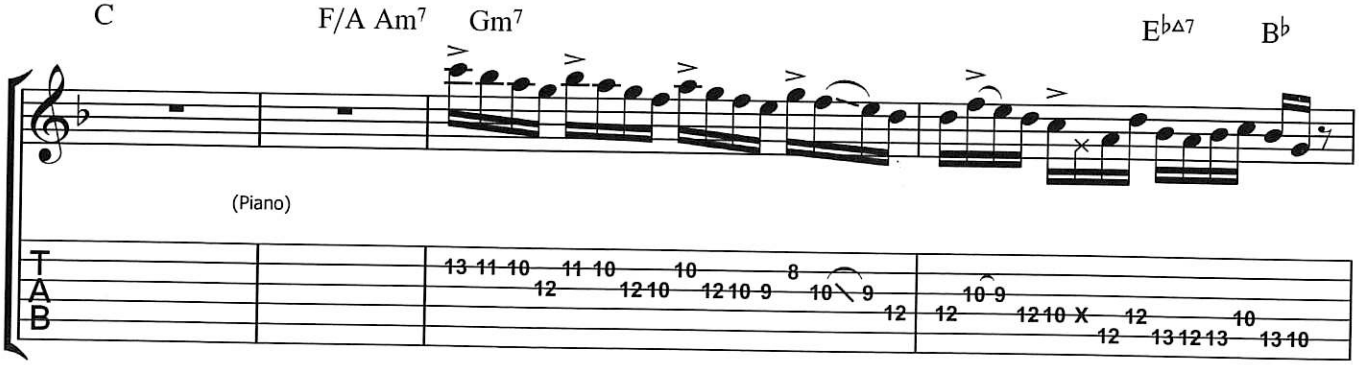
Verse

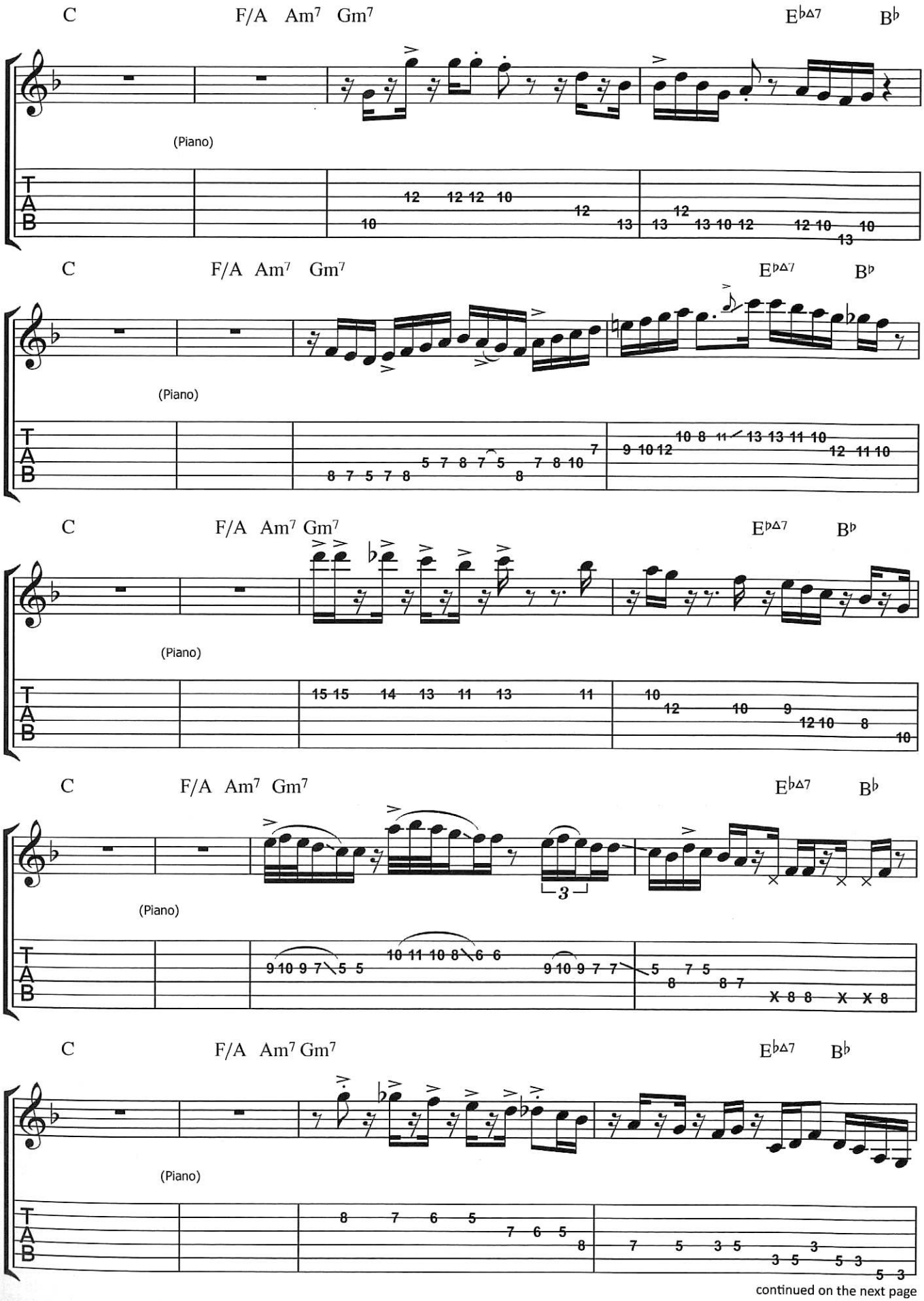
During the Verse sections of this song Nile plays a complicated single note line which clearly outlines the harmony. Note his use of the Em$^{7\flat5}$ chord on beat 3 of bars 1 and 3 - in bar 3 the chord becomes a C$\sharp^{o7}$ as Bernard plays a C$\sharp$ in the bass, altering the harmony. This line should be played staccato throughout.



Trading Solos Section

Towards the end of the song, Nile begins trading two bar solos with the piano. This begins in the final Chorus (with a vocal) and continues into the Outro of the song. The following transcription is for the trading solos that begin during the final Chorus at CD time 2.40. For each solo trade, the piano plays over the first two bars of the section while Nile takes the second. Harmonically, Nile stays within the home key of F for most of his lines, using the G Dorian mode - entirely appropriate for the Gm sound. Some of his lines also feature use of chromatic passing tones.





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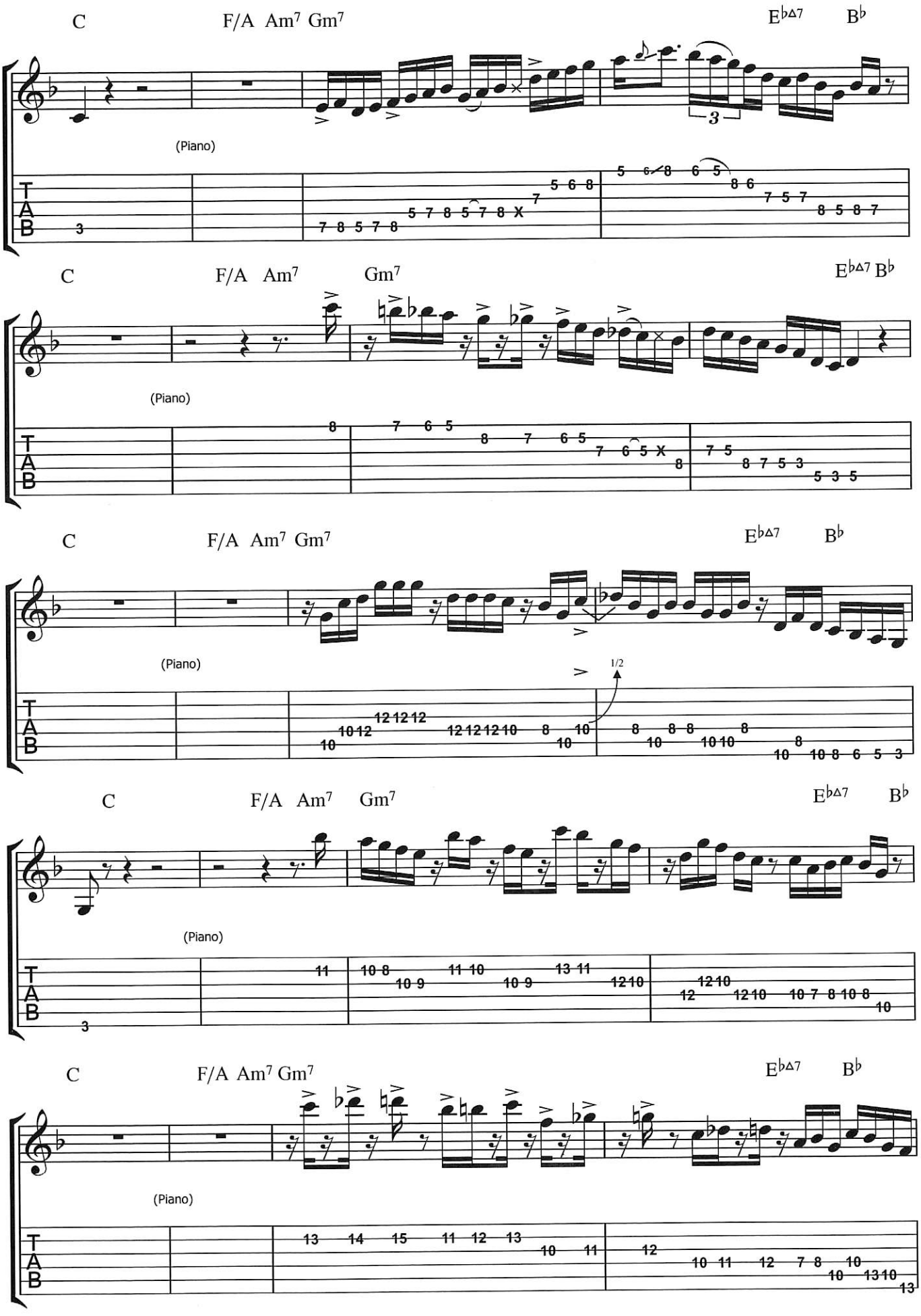
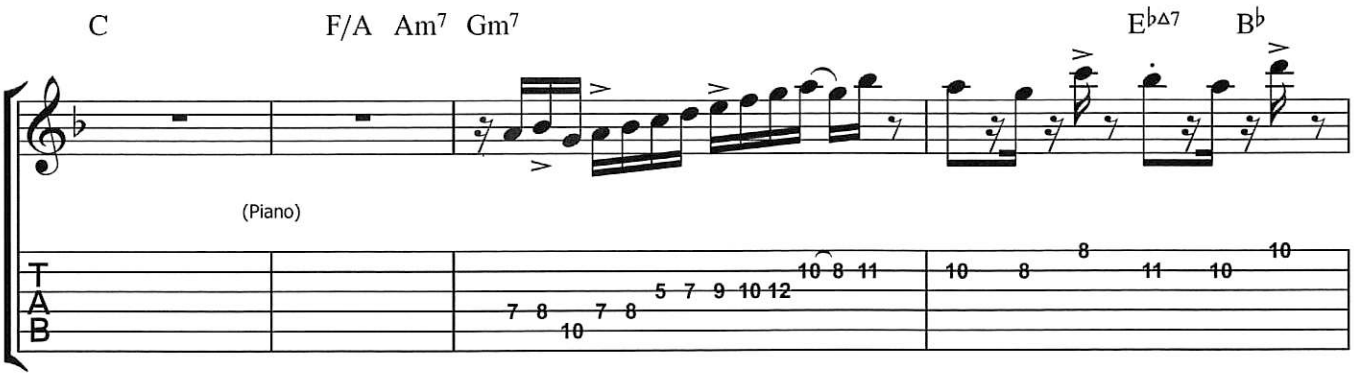
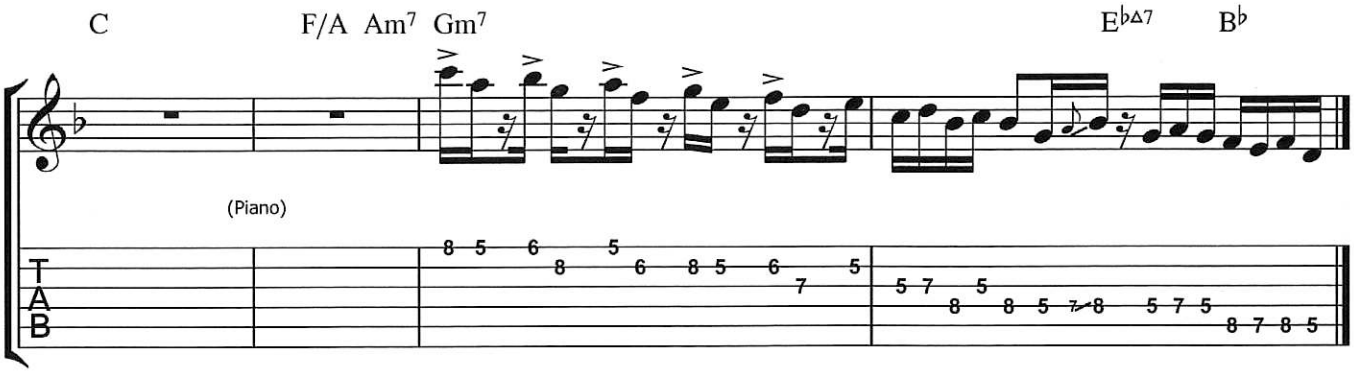
Chapter 21 - Diana Ross: My Old Piano




C
F/A Am7 Gm7
E♭Δ7 B♭
(Piano)
T
A
B


C
F/A Am7 Gm7
E♭Δ7 B♭
(Piano)
T
A
B

Chapter 22
Burn Hard

Artist: Chic
Album: *Take It Off*
Written By: Nile Rodgers/Bernard Edwards
Chart Positions: Non single

'Burn Hard' is from the 1981 Chic album *Take It Off*. With the absence of the Chic Strings (for the first time), and the addition of a horn section (featuring none other than the Brecker Brothers), the album was something of a carefully considered departure from their established sound - after all, by 1981, disco was over. With its Tony Wright-designed cartoon cover, *Take It Off* was both a brave album, and a good album. It was well-received by the critics, but despite this it failed to reach anything like the dizzy heights of success that *Risqué* and *C'est Chic* managed: in the US it reached #124 on the Album Chart and failed to chart at all in the UK. 'Burn Hard' nevertheless remains a classic Chic track, and it's one that is particularly popular with bass players.

Song Lyrics

The lyrics to this song are typical Chic: a tribute to music, dancing, and in this case, Bernard's bass playing. This song features one of the rare occasions that Bernard played slap bass.

Slap your bass, burn hard, burn hard
Work out, work out
Brahms gonna do the charm
Slap your bass, burn hard, burn hard

When the music calls,
It's like I'm ten feet tall
A song can take you far away from day to day

Let's drink to it, hold to it
(Burn hard today, today get smart)
Let's refine and free fine and moonshine
(Smart as a fox)

Slap your bass, burn hard, burn hard
Work out, work out
Brahms gonna do the charm
Slap your bass, burn hard, burn hard

I know the world has changed
But some things are the same
Like COD's and SOB's and ABC's

Let's drink to it, hold to it
(Burn hard today, today get smart)
Let's define and refine and moonshine
(Smart as a fox)

Slap your bass, burn hard, burn hard
Work out, work out
Brahms gonna do the charm
Slap your bass, burn hard, burn hard

Burn hard, slap your bass
Burn hard, slap your bass

Slap your bass, burn hard, burn hard
Work out, work out
Brahms gonna do the charm
Slap your bass, burn hard, burn hard

Burn hard today, today get smart
Smart as a fox, a fox you say

Burn hard, slap your bass
Burn hard, slap your bass
Burn hard, slap your bass
Burn hard, slap your bass

(Repeat to Fade)

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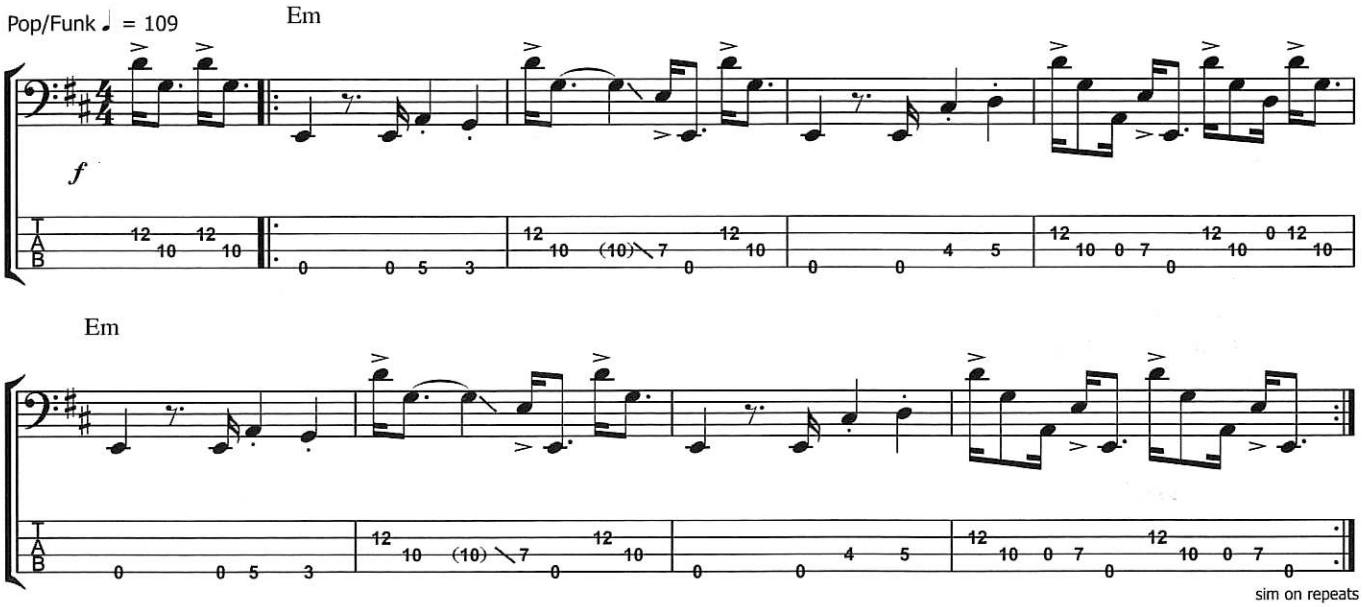
Bass Guitar

'Burn Hard' is a real showcase for Bernard Edwards, featuring not just a great fingerstyle funk groove, but a great slapped Breakdown as well. The throaty growl of the bass tone makes it fairly obvious that Bernard used his Music Man StingRay on this track.

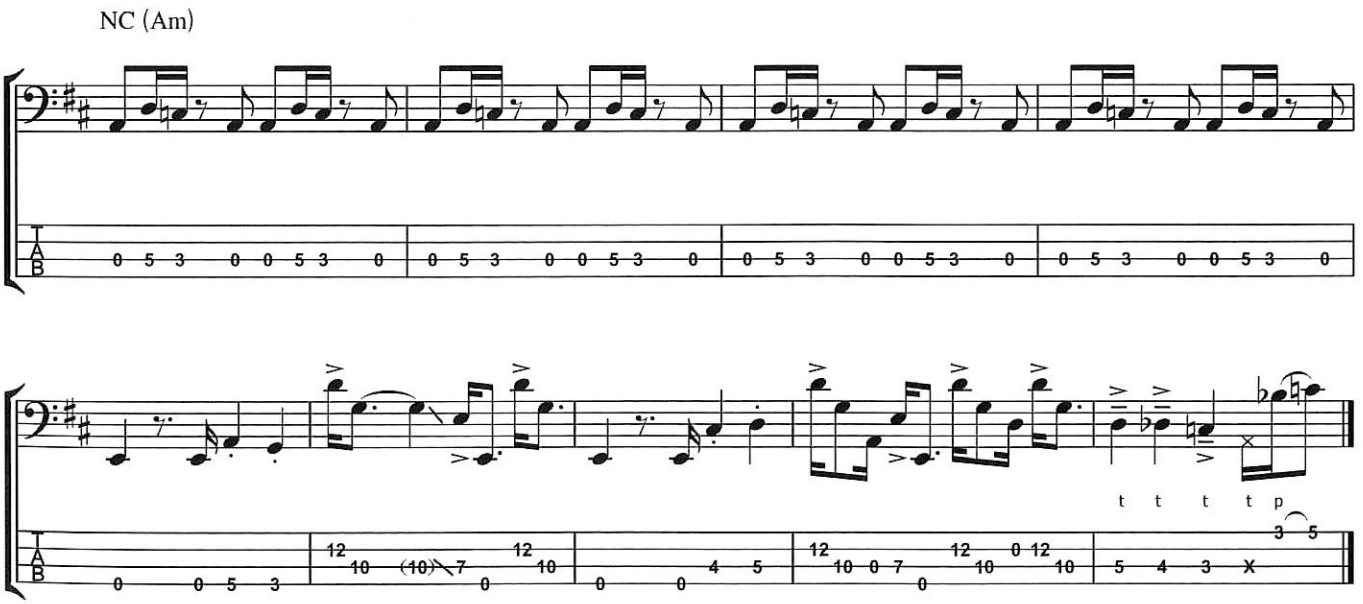
Intro/Chorus

The main bass groove that opens 'Burn Hard' is used for much of the song. Bernard combines his trademark staccato lines with some slippery upper register fills, all derived from the chord tones of the Em^7 chord. note how his line in the fourth bar of the sequence is a development of the second bar.



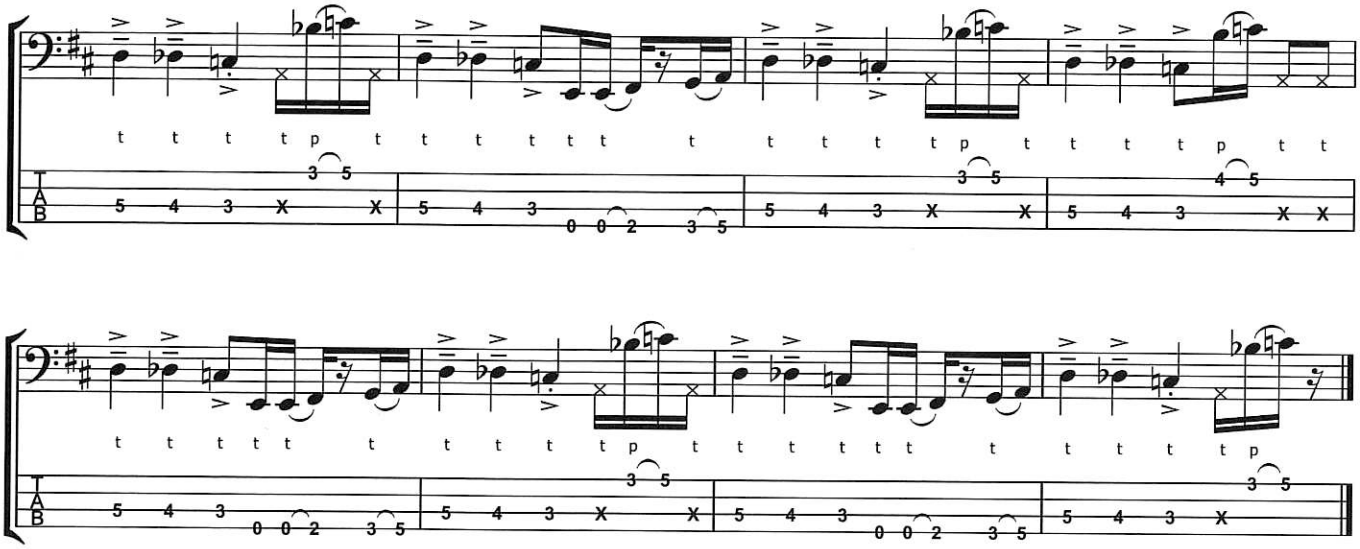
Verse

During the Verse Bernard plays a repeating bass figure that is mirrored by the piano. This is followed by a repeat of the main groove, and this section in turn ends with a descending chromatic figure that culminates in a popped hammer-on. This final bar forms the basis of the Middle 8 and Breakdown sections later in the song.



Middle 8

This section, which occurs at CD time 1.51 is slapped throughout. Bernard plays a simple descending chromatic groove from the D (as used in the final bar of the Verse), and embellishes the line each time with a simple fill.



Breakdown

This section is a continuation of the ideas introduced in the Middle 8 and begins at CD time 3.36. As there are so many great fills in this section I have transcribed the entire section, which continues to the end of the track. Check out Bernard's hammer-on/pull-off figures in the third and fourth bars, his open string hammer-on figures in the fifth bar and his use of ghost notes throughout.

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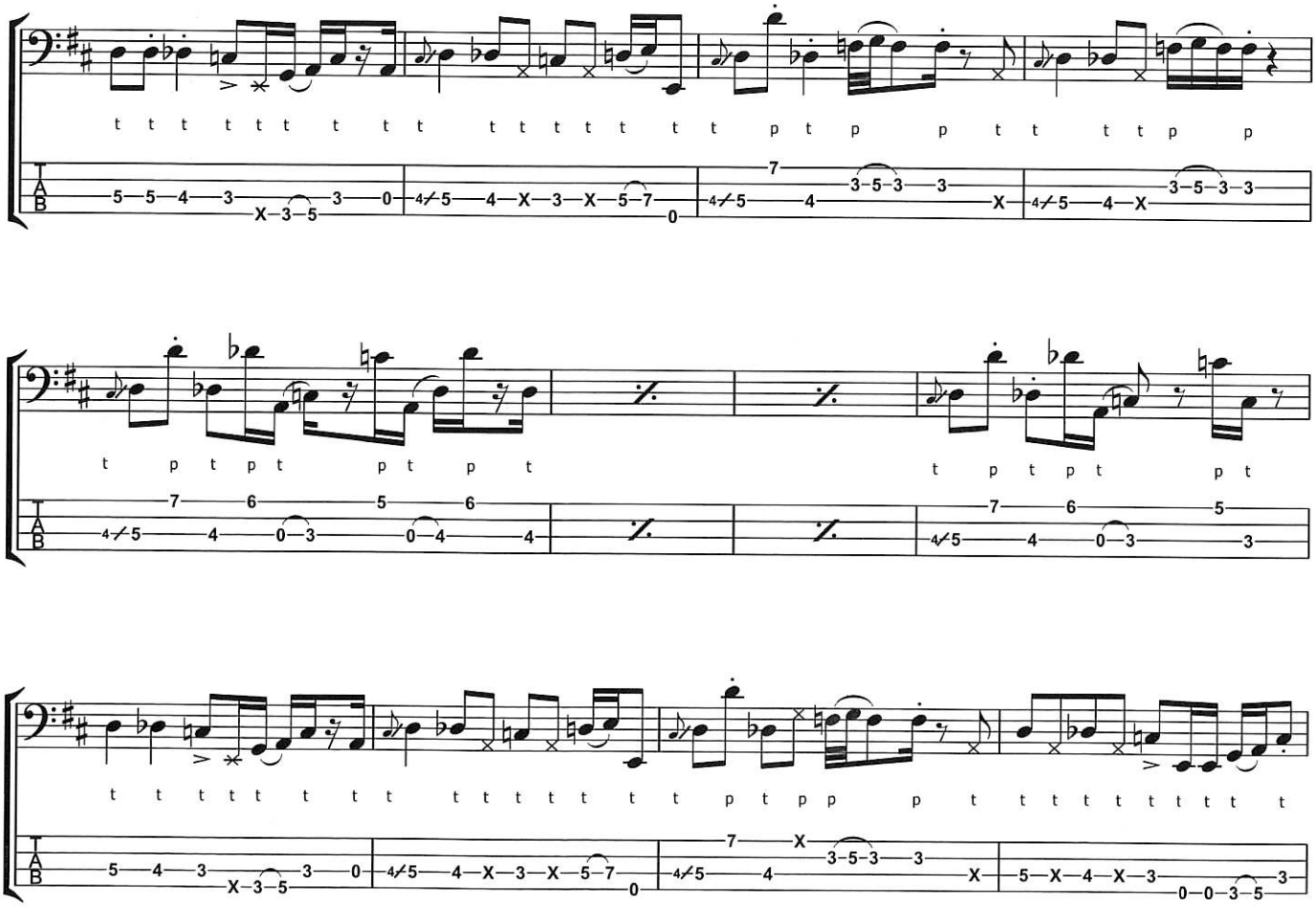
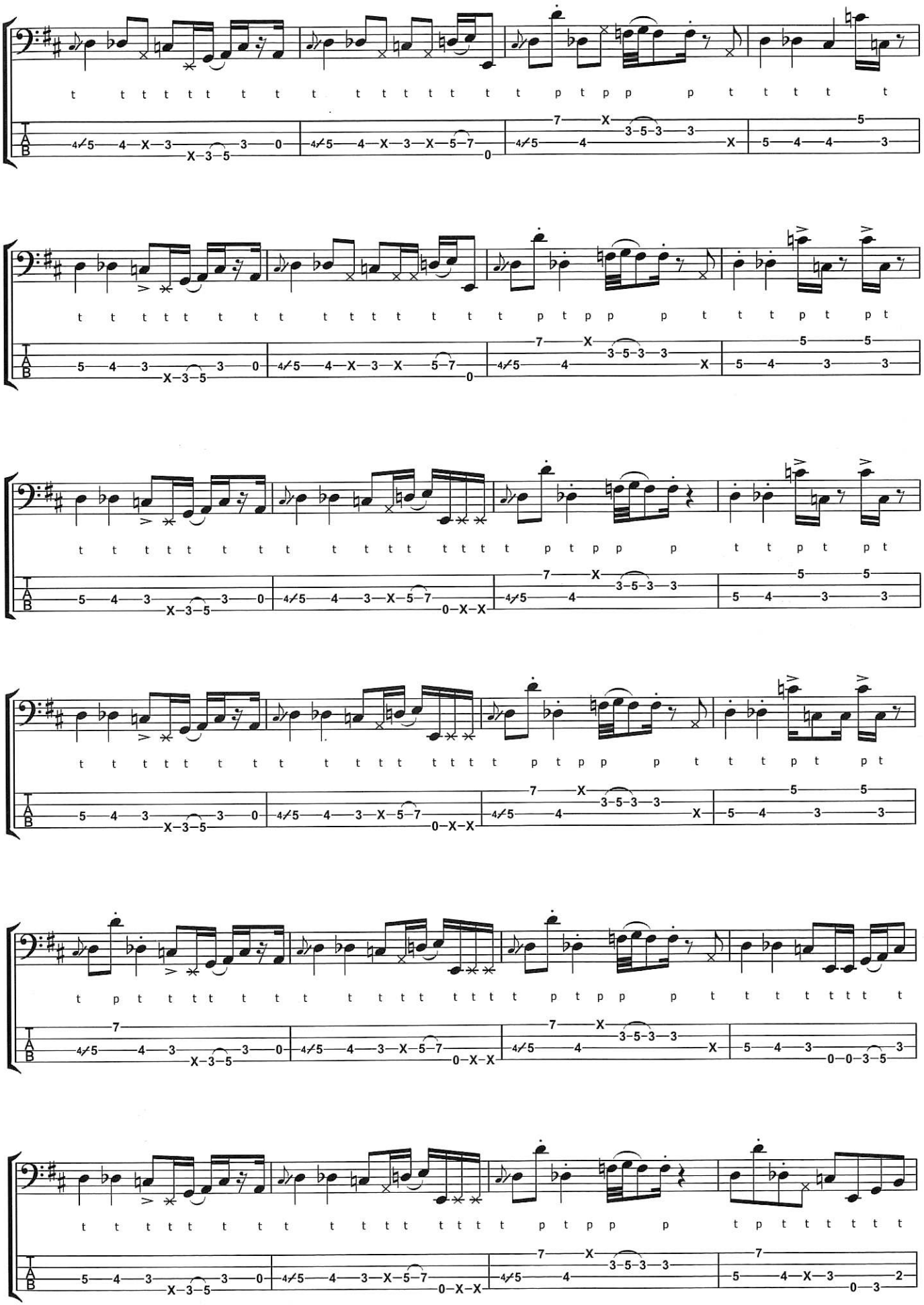
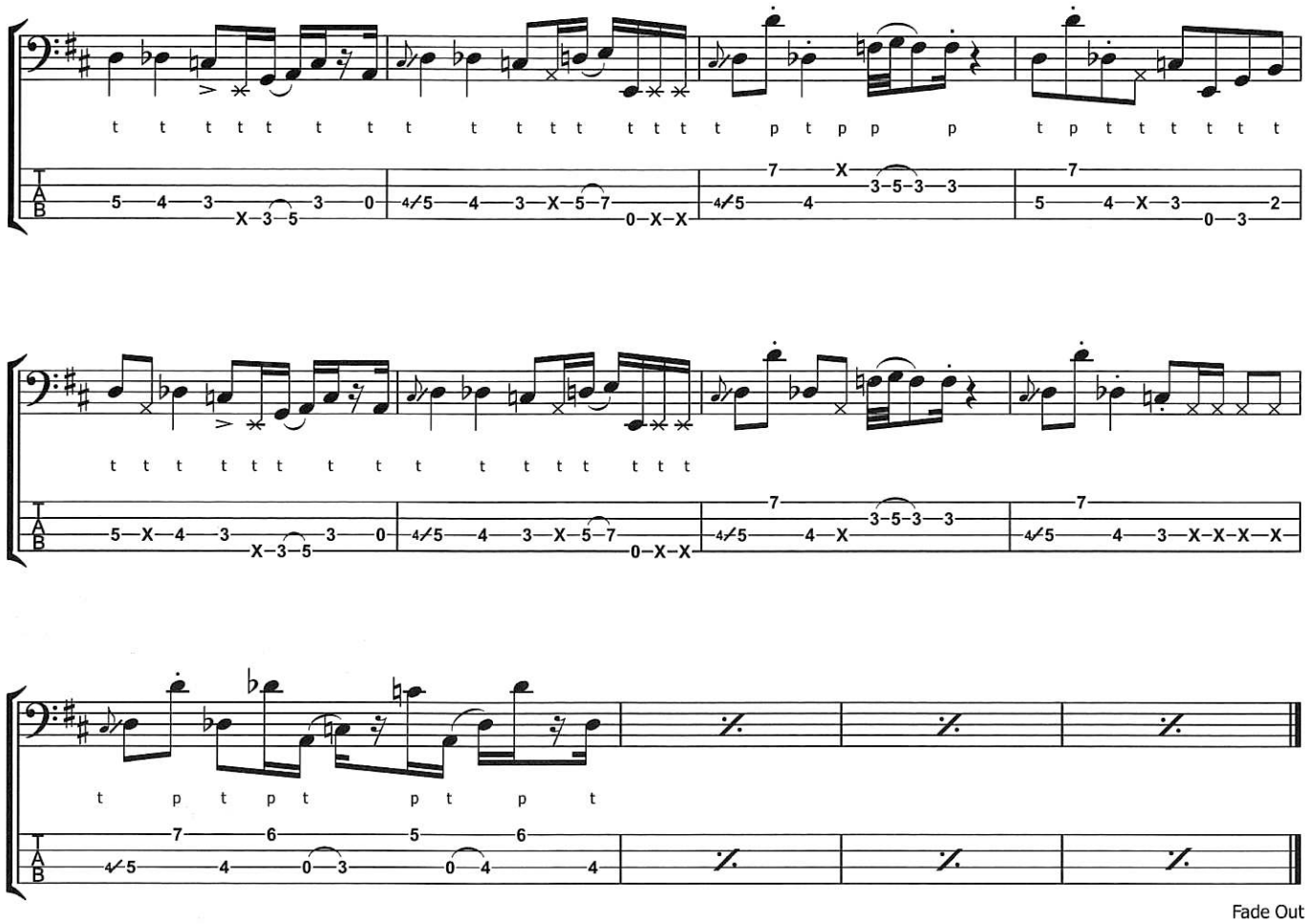






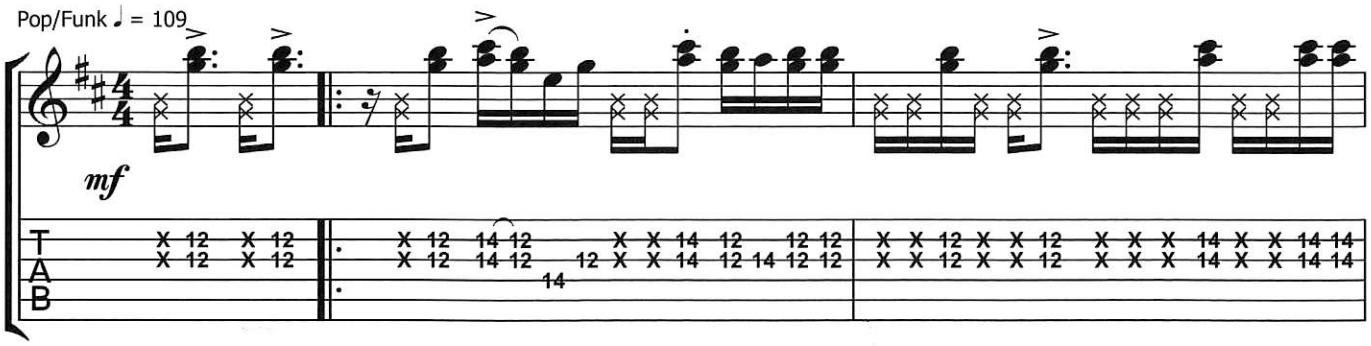
Fade Out

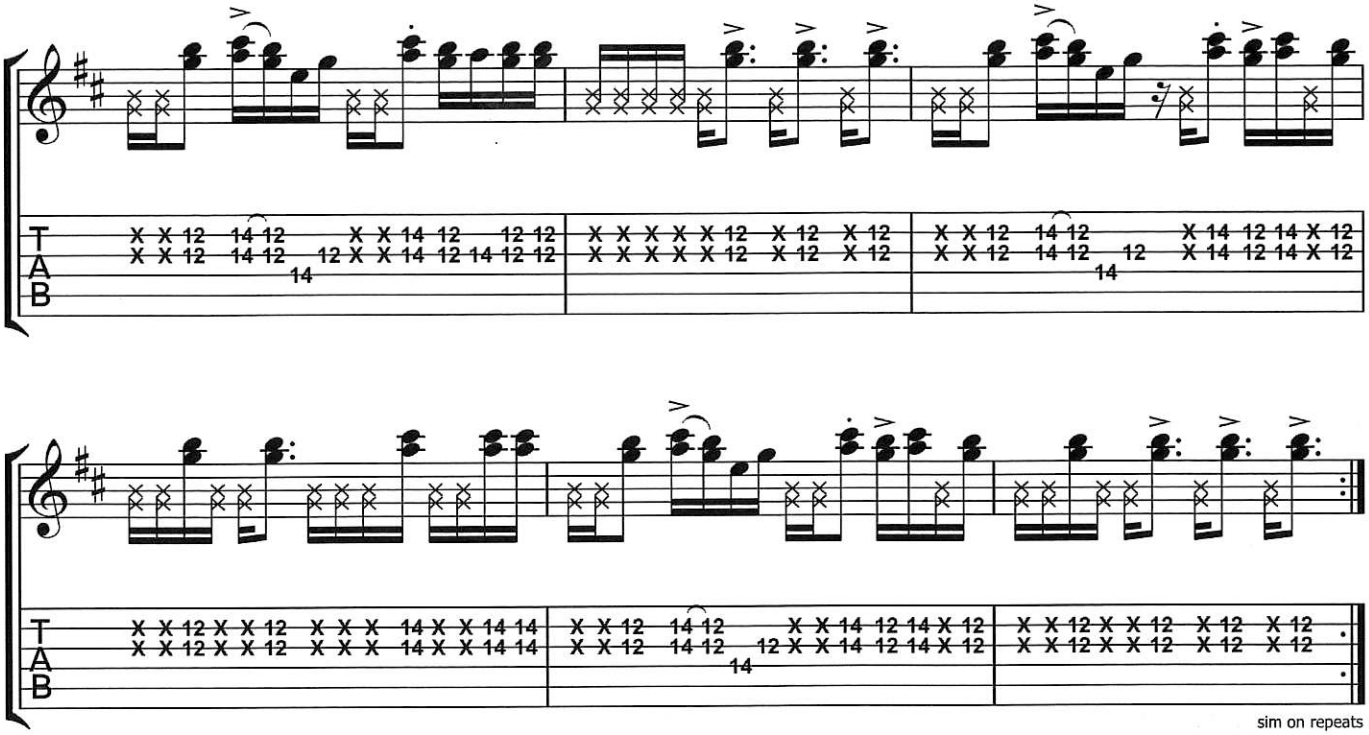
Guitar

Nile plays a great funk rhythm part during the Intro and Chorus sections of this song, but keeps his part minimal in many of the other sections, allowing Bernard to enjoy the spotlight on his own. There is also some nice distorted riffing just before the last Chorus before the Breakdown.

Intro/Chorus

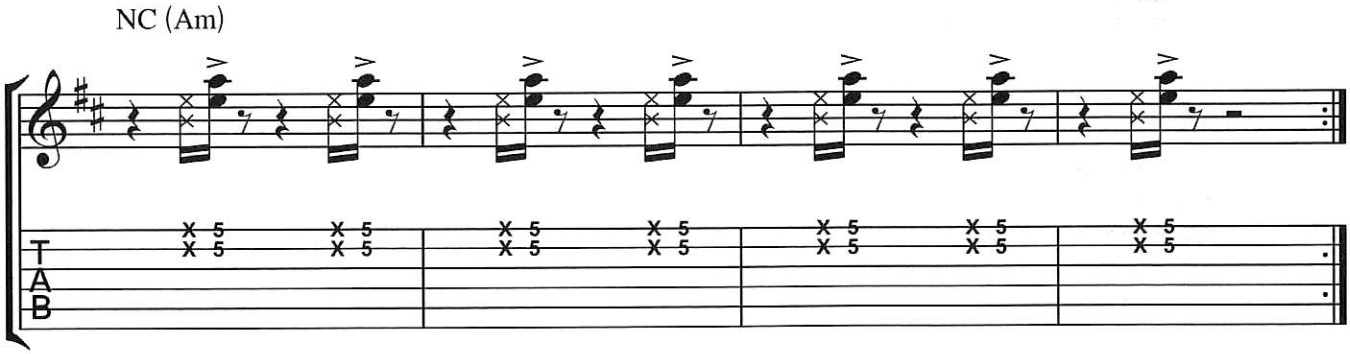
The following is a transcription of Nile's funky rhythm guitar part from the first eight bars of the song. This part is used, with minimal variation,for much of the song. Nile centres his part around the Em^7 chord position at the twelfth fret. As usual most of the gaps in the rhythm have been filled with ghost notes, adding to the rhythmic feel of the part.





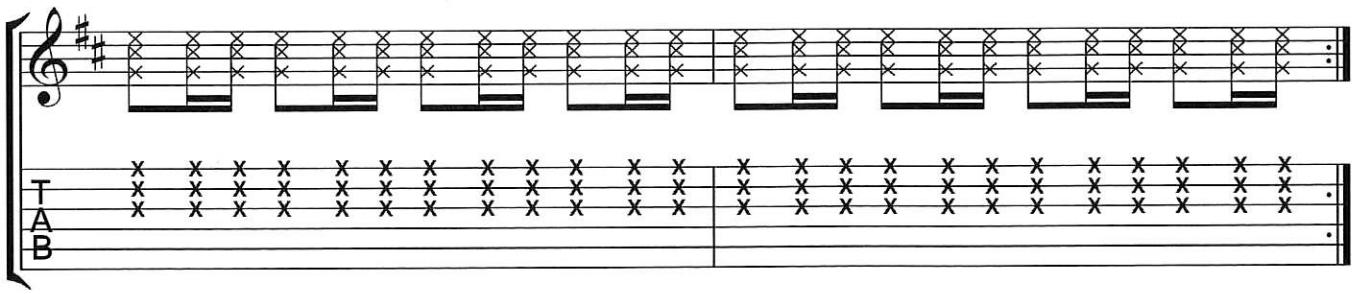
Verse

Nile plays a very minimal part during the Verse, adding in only occasional stabs on the top part of an Am chord.



Middle 8

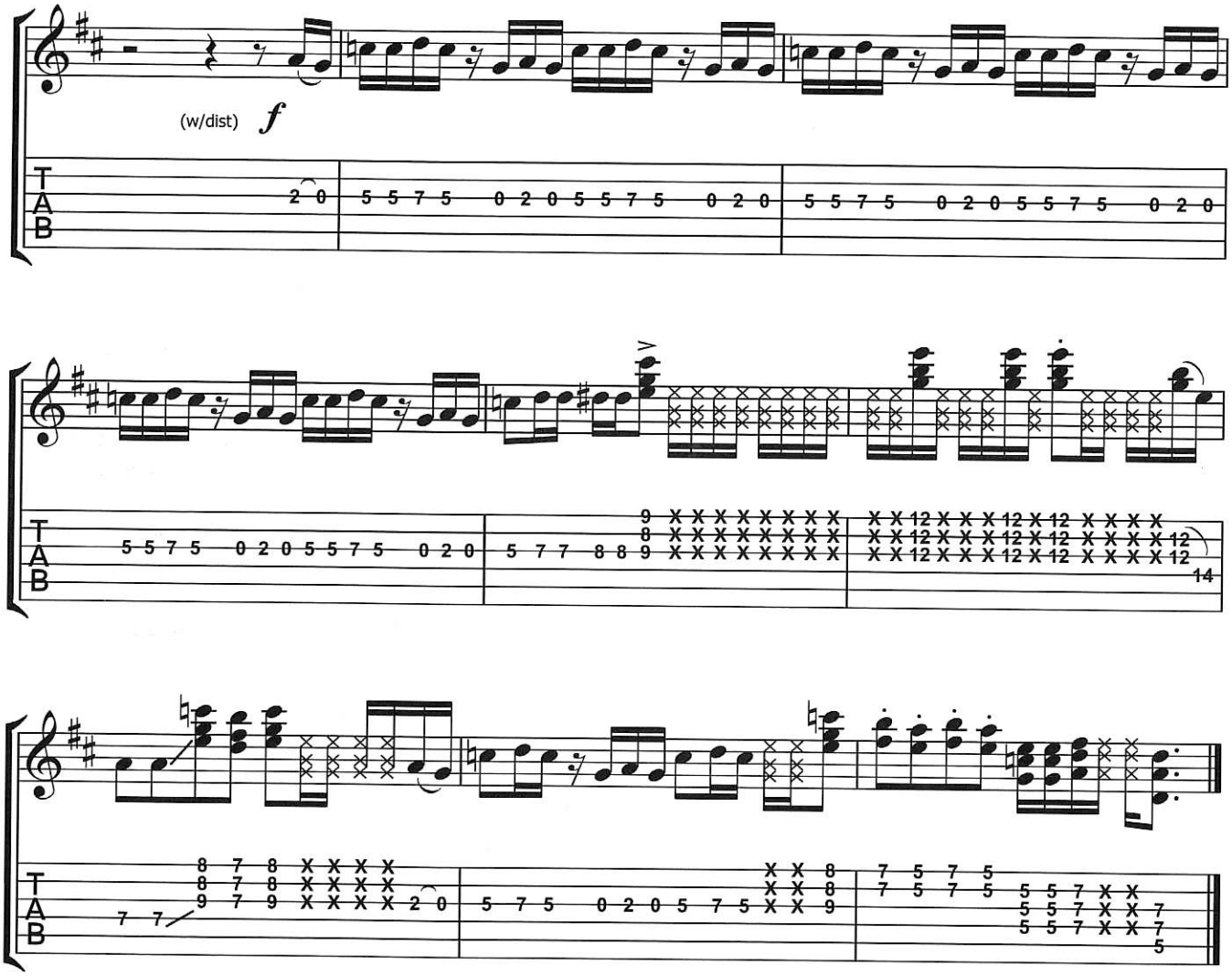
During the Middle 8 Nile strums a rhythmic part using ghost notes. As there is no chordal backing for this section, the part is there simply to add rhythmic interest.



Chapter 22 - Chic: Burn Hard

Guitar Solo

At CD time 2.41 Nile plays an embellishment of the bass riff used during the Verse. He then funks the part up with ghost notes and partial chords. You'll need to use distortion and a wah pedal in order to approximate the same tone as Nile during this section.



Chapter 23
Why

Artist: Carly Simon
Album: *Soup For One Soundtrack*
Written By: Bernard Edwards/Nile Rodgers
Chart Positions: #10 UK Chart

In the early eighties Chic were asked to score the music for the film *Soup For One*, a romantic comedy set in Manhattan. While they used the opportunity to air some unreleased and overlooked material, they also wrote some new music, including the theme track 'Soup For One' (sampled in 2001 by French outfit Modjo for their hit song 'Lady'), and 'Why' which was written for Carly Simon, a hugely successful singer/songwriter. 'Why' never actually made it into the finished movie (which flopped), but enjoyed chart success in the UK where it reached the top ten, giving Carly Simon her first UK hit in more than five years. The soundtrack album was however unsuccessful despite good reviews. It was turned down by Atlantic, but released by former Atlantic employee Jerry Greenberg, who had started his own label, Mirage.

Song Lyrics

The actual lyrics to this song are almost inconsequential next to the famous 'la-di-da-di-da' vocal line, arguably the biggest hook in the song.

La di da di da
La di da di da
La di da di da
La di da di da

Why does your love hurt so much?
Why?
Why does you love hurt so much?
Don't know why

You know I loved you baby
But all the while you just betrayed me
In the warmth of our bed
All the things that you said were

La di da di da
La di da di da
La di da di da
La di da di da

Why does your love hurt so much?
Why?
Why does your love hurt so much?
Don't know why

You said our love was sacred
But you left me alone to make it
You want to come back again someday
But darling here's what I say

La di da di da
La di da di da
La di da di da
La di da di da

Why does your love hurt so much?
Why?
Why does your love hurt so much?

La di da di da
La di da di da
La di da di da
La di da di da

Why, why does your love hurt so much?

You say you come back again someday
But darling here's what I say

La di da di da
La di da di da

Why does your love hurt so much?
Don't know why
Why does your love hurt so much?
Why?

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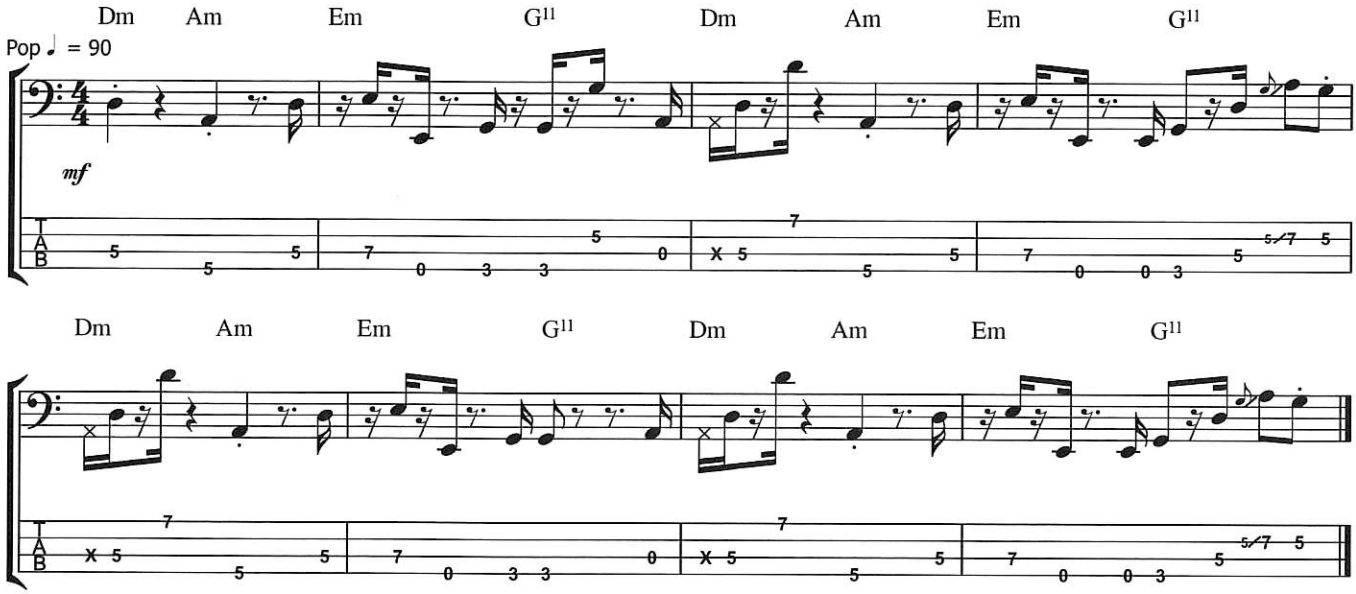
Chapter 23 - Carly Simon: Why

Bass Guitar

For this slow, reggae-inflected track, Bernard plays a simple, but angular groove that is the perfect accompaniment to the offbeat guitar and piano figure. This track is all about the groove, and Bernard doesn't allow chops to get in the way of feel here, keeping his part simple, but at the same time making it one of the highlights of the song.

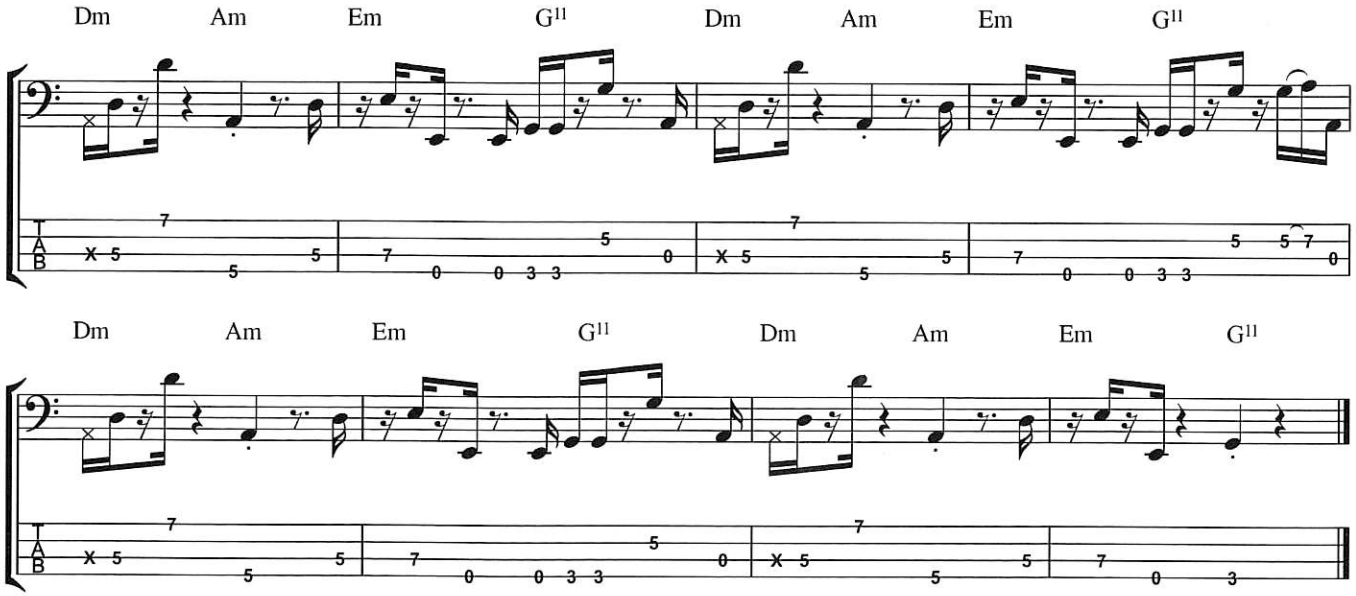
Intro

During the Intro Bernard lays down the groove that will support the Chorus of the song. While harmonically simple, the part features a lot of syncopation, particularly in bars 2 and 4. These syncopated rhythms need to be performed accurately in order for them to be effective. The ghost note at the beginning of the third, fifth and seventh bars feels natural and helps with the slow reggae feel of the groove. Bernard does not stray too far from the established bass part, although he does decorate the fourth bar of the sequence with a simple fill each time it comes around.



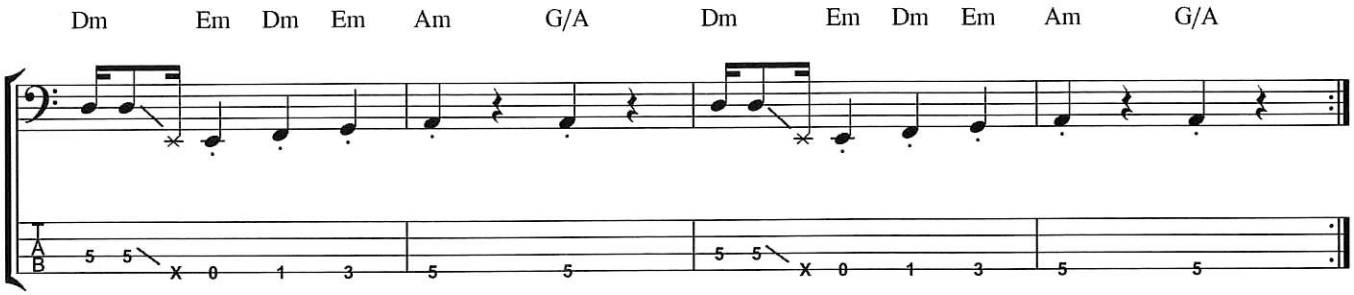
Chorus

The following transcription is of the first Chorus, which directly follows the Intro. You can see that Bernard continues to play the same basic groove, although it contains some subtle embellishments, such as the two sixteenth note G's in bars 2, 4 and 6. The absence of a fill in the last bar sets up the transition to the Verse.



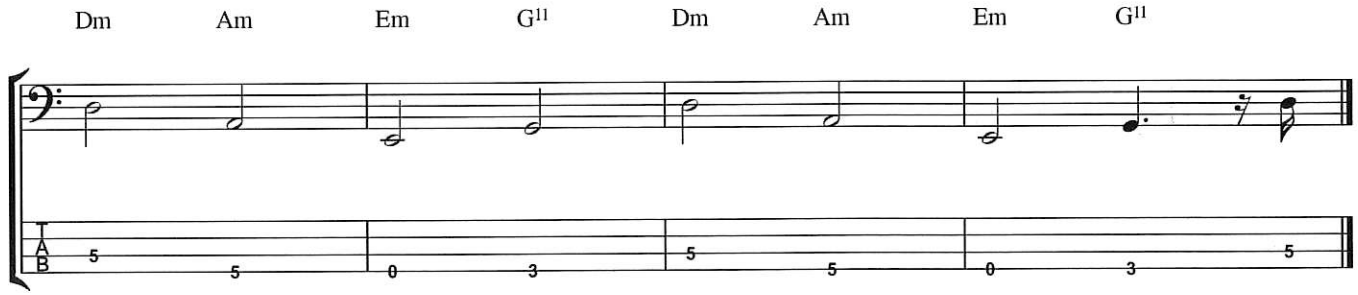
Verse

For the first and third bars of the Verse, Bernard plays an ascending bass figure that works well against the alternating Dm and Em chords. His D's on the first beat are obviously the root of the Dm chord, the E on beat two is the root of the Em chord, the F on beat three is the flat third of the Dm chord, and the G on beat four is the flat third of the Em chord. Notice that Bernard keeps the low A in the bass in bars 2 and 4, even while the chord above it changes from Am to G.



Bridge

For the Bridge section - which features the famous 'la-di-da-di-da' vocal refrain - Bernard simplifies his line enormously, opting for half notes throughout. This is an effective move since it highlights the vocal part, and prepares the listener's ear for the next Chorus.

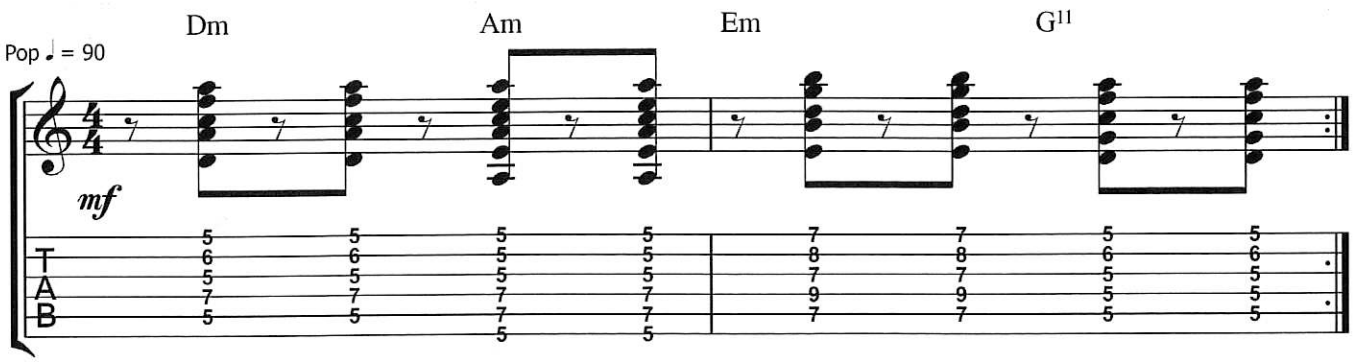


Guitar

Nile plays a simple part throughout this song, hitting chords on the upbeat throughout most of the song's sections. This adds a reggae flavour to the groove - not something that the Chic Organisation was known for. Nevertheless, it is very effective. His part is low in the mix, with the piano being the more dominant chordal instrument in this case.

Intro/Chorus

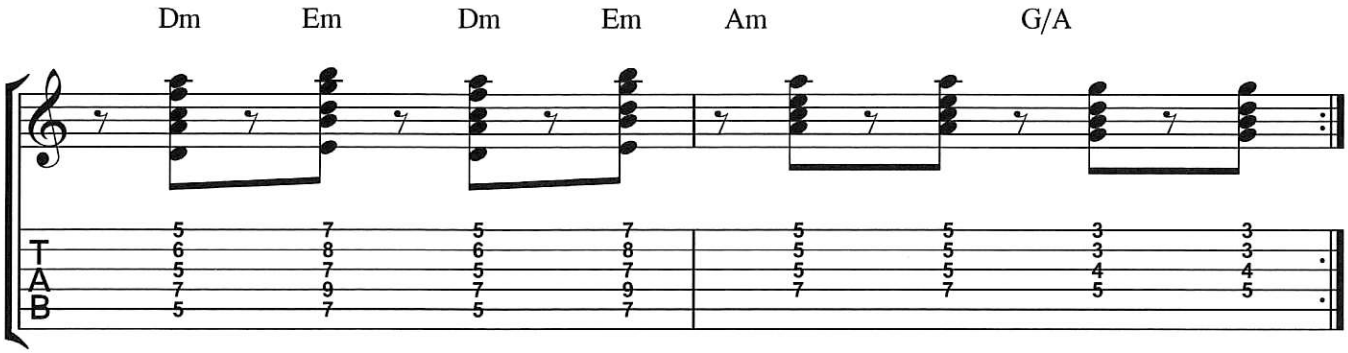
During these sections Nile simply outlines the progression with straightforward voicings.



Chapter 23 - Carly Simon: Why

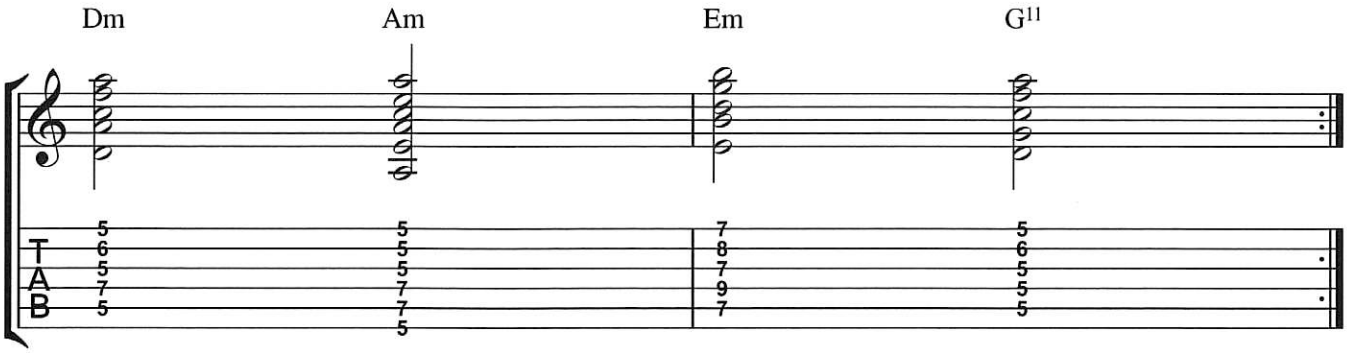
Verse

Nile continues in the same vein for the Verse sections...



Bridge

Like Bernard, Nile plays half notes during the Bridge section, allowing the vocal to take centre stage.



Dance Dance Dance
Everybody Dance
Strike Up The Band
Le Freak
Chic Cheer
I Want Your Love
Happy Man
He's The Greatest Dancer
We Are Family
Lost In Music
Thinking Of You
Pretty Baby
Good Times
My Feet Keep Dancing
My Forbidden Lover
I'm Coming Out
Upside Down
My Old Piano
Burn Hard
Why

NILE RODGERS & BERNARD EDWARDS:

Funk & Disco

Grooves for Bass & Guitar

Stuart Clayton has been a professional musician and writer for over ten years. He has worked as a staff writer for *Bass Guitar Magazine* since its first issue, written seven bass instruction books for Sanctuary Publishing, including *100 Tips For Bass Guitar You Should Have Been Told*, *Crash Course: Bass*, *Bass Xtreme*, *Basic Bass Workout* and *Giants Of Bass* and toured the world with Carl Palmer. He now runs his own company, Bassline Publishing, which publishes transcription books for legendary bassists such as Mark King, Stuart Hamm, Bernard Edwards and John Entwistle, as well as an acclaimed range of tuition books such as *Ultimate Slap Bass* and *Solo Arrangements for Electric Bass*. He is also Head of Bass at the British Institute of Modern Music (Bristol) and is an artist endorsee for Zon basses and TC Electronic amplification.

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